

THE
ART OF PRESERVING
HEALTH.



THE
ART OF PRESERVING

HEALTH.

Sophia Burdett

BY

JOHN ARMSTRONG, M.D.

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED

To my dear

K. Brown

A CRITICAL ESSAY ON THE POEM,

BY J. AIKIN, M.D.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR T. CADELL, JUN. AND W. DAVIES,
(SUCCESSORS TO MR. CADELL) STRAND.

1796.

THE

ART OF PRESERVING

PLATE

BY

JOHN ARMSTRONG M.D.



A CERTIFICATE OF THE LOSS
OF A PLATE IN THE LIBRARY

BY JOHN ARMSTRONG M.D.

LONDON

PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR BY J. DODS & CO.
(LONDON: 1800)

ON
DR. ARMSTRONG's POEM
ON THE
ART OF PRESERVING HEALTH.

THE Poems termed *Didactic* may be considered as of two kinds. Those to which the term is more properly applied, are such as directly profess to teach some art or science. The other species consists of those which, taking up some speculative topic, establish a theory concerning it by argument and illustration. Of the former kind many will familiarly occur to the reader's memory ; and the piece before us is an example of it. Of the latter are various philosophical and argumentative pieces, from the

poem of *Lucretius* on the Epicurean system, to *Pope's* *Essay on Man*, and *Akenside's* *Pleasures of the Imagination*. A middle place between the two seems to be occupied by moral poetry, which, at the same time that it lays down practical rules for the conduct of life, discusses the theoretical principles on which they are founded.

Now, in estimating the respective value of these different products of the poetic art, it will be necessary to begin with considering what poetry essentially is, and what are its powers and purposes. It is, I conceive, essential to poetry that it should present ideas to the imagination, either agreeable of themselves, or rendered so by the cloathing and accompaniments given to them. Its leading aim is to please; and its powers are, to a certain degree, to make pleasing what would not be so of itself. If, therefore, by the poet's art, to the main end of giving pleasure, can be associated that of communicating instruction in such a way as will more strongly

and agreeably impress it on the mind, its complete purpose may be said to be attained. Delight and profit combined are all that can be wished from the noblest of the fine arts.

But there are subjects, the nature of which renders such a combination scarcely possible, and in which every attempt to produce it, can only yield an incongruous mixture of ill-placed ornament and defective instruction. These are especially to be found in those arts of life which depend upon the application of mechanical rules, or the practical skill acquired by experience. To describe the minute processes of manual art in verse, in such a manner as that they shall be understood, is not only a very difficult task, but a wholly fruitless one; since, after all, the description cannot be so clear and precise as one written in prose, nor can the verse rise to poetry. We may, indeed, admire the skill shewn in the attempt to decorate a barren subject, but we must regret that the writer's talents

were so ill employed. So obvious is this conclusion, that we may be assured no one ever wrote a didactic poem for the simple purpose of teaching an art. The choice has therefore been dictated by a search after novelty, or the desire of exhibiting a proof of poetical skill. These motives are expressly avowed by VIRGIL in his Georgics, and are much more probable than the deep political design attributed to that poem, of exciting the Roman nobility to the pursuits of agriculture.

But while perhaps *every* poem strictly didactic labours under the inconvenience of a subject not calculated for displaying the art of poetry in its fairest form, some, both from their nature, and from the manner of treating them, are less defective in this respect than others. Thus, certain arts are closely connected in their theory with large and philosophical views of the system of the universe, or of the principles of the human mind. Some, even in their practice, afford matter for pleasing

description, and admit of easy illustration from the most striking and agreeable objects of external nature. For example, the arts of husbandry are evidently allied to a vast variety of great and interesting topics; and we all know how advantageously VIRGIL has employed them as the ground-work of one of the most pleasing poems of antiquity. This piece, however, will also serve to shew the unfavourable effect of attempting to express matter purely technical in a poetical manner. For no unprejudiced reader will deny, that in many of the preceptive passages, notwithstanding the variety of resources he employs to elevate them into poetry, he is overpowered by his subject, and chained, as it were, to the earth he is labouring;—while on the other hand, as a teacher of the art, he is frequently so obscure, as to have embarrassed the whole race of agricultural and literary critics since his time. It may also be observed, that had he extended his views further into the philosophical part of his subject, and made

a full use of the moral and physical variety it was capable of affording, he would not have found it necessary to wander into digressions so remotely connected with his proposed topics, as scarcely to be justified by any reasonable claim of poetic licence. For even the semblance of teaching is destroyed by deviations, the manifest purpose of which is to disengage the reader's attention from the main subject, and fix it upon somewhat more captivating to the imagination.

With respect to the Piece before us, its subject seems on the whole as happily calculated for didactic poetry, as most of those which have been taken for the purpose. To say that it is a peculiarly proper one for a physician to write upon, is saying nothing of consequence to the reader. But the preservation of health is, in the first place, a matter of general importance, and therefore interesting to readers of every class. Then, although its rules, scientifically considered, belong to a particular profession, and

require previous studies for their full comprehension, yet in the popular use, they are level to the understanding and experience of every man of reading and reflection. Had the subject been more strictly medical, such as the nature and cure of a particular disease, it would have been liable to the objections attending a confined and professional topic ; and like the *Siphylis* of FRACASTORIUS, could scarcely, by the greatest poetical skill, have been rendered generally pleasing or instructive. But every man being in some measure entrusted with the care of his own health, and being accustomed to speculations concerning Air, Diet, Exercise, and the Passions, the subject may be considered as universal. It is true, these topics can be poetically treated only in a popular manner, and the writer who chuses the vehicle of verse in treating of them, must take up with common and perhaps superficial notions. But by associating these notions with images addressed to the imagination, he may convey

them in a more agreeable form ; and he may advantageously employ the diction of poetry to give to practical rules an energy and conciseness of expression which may forcibly imprint them on the memory. This power is, indeed, the principal circumstance which imparts real utility to didactic poetry ; and we all feel its effects on becoming acquainted with the moral and critical works of such authors as **HORACE**, **BOILEAU**, and **POPE**. Further, the topics with which the Art of Health is conversant, are connected with various of the loftiest and most extensive speculations on general nature ; and in pursuing the regular vein of thought, many sources of truly poetical ideas may be opened. It remains now to examine how far the author has availed himself of the advantages of his subject, and in what manner he has supported the character of a didactic poet.

As Invocation is an established part of a regular poem, it was necessary that the piece before us

should be provided with that decoration. The choice of HYGEIA, or the goddess of Health, for the object of address, was dictated by a very obvious propriety. The manner is imitated from that of LUCRETIUS in his fine invocation of Venus ; and much imagination is displayed in the description of her approach, and of the various baleful forms of disease and death that fly from her presence.

Of the sources from which health is drawn, salubrious air is one of the most remarkable. Air, therefore, with propriety, is made the peculiar topic of the first book. Perhaps a descriptive passage of more strength can scarcely be met with than that which enumerates the various contaminations of this element in a crowded city. The ideas, indeed, in their own nature disgusting, might be thought almost too vividly represented, did they not by contrast add to the sweetness of the subsequent rural picture, the effect of which is almost equal to that of the fabled calenture in calling forth irresistible longings after

the country. Every reader familiar with the vicinity of the metropolis will feel peculiar pleasure from the glimpses given of those favourite summer retreats, Windsor, Richmond, Dulwich, and Hampstead, which will excite in his mind particular images, always much more engaging to the fancy than general ones. The poet next exercises his invention in one of the higher efforts of the art, that of allegorical personification. His figure and genealogy of *Quartana*, are well imagined; but like most of those who create these fancy-formed beings, he fails in the agency he attributes to her; for in merely inspiring a fit of the ague, she acts not as a person, but as an incorporeal cause.

He goes on to describe the different sites unfriendly to health, particularly the too moist and the too dry, which he makes the foundation of what are called in the schools of physic the phlegmatic and melancholic temperaments. In his instructions how to guard against the evils of different situations, he somewhat

anticipates his future topics of diet and exercise. The passage, however, is full of vigorous description ; and the means of correcting the watery and the parched soil afford spirited sketches of landscape. But he is no where so minute, as in that perpetual topic of an Englishman, the bad weather under which our island is so frequently submerged. A kind of splenetic strength of painting distinguishes his gloomy draught of loaded skies and eastern blasts, and of that vexatious fickleness of weather, in which all the seasons seem to “ mix in every monstrous day.”

We are, however, brought into good-humour again by the description of cheerful, dry, and sheltered spots in which atmospherical evils may be palliated ; and the concluding eulogy on the cheering and invigorating influence of solar heat, leaves the fancy agreeably impressed with a sensation similar to that imparted by a serene summer’s day. On the whole, the descriptive beauties of this book are con-

siderable ; but as a leading head of his subject, it might, I conceive, have been lengthened with advantage, by some circumstances relative to the influence of air upon health, which he has not touched upon. The sudden operation upon the spirits by alterations in the weight of the atmosphere, as indicated by the barometer, and the medicinal effects of change of climate upon invalids, would have afforded matter both for curious discussion, and interesting, and even pathetic, narration.

Diet, the subject of the second book, is, as the writer observes on entering upon it, comparatively barren and unfavourable to poetry. It is evidently more immersed in technical investigations than the former ; and its connection with the grossest of the sensual pleasures, renders it difficult to be treated on without derogating from the dignity of a philosophical poem. Dr. ARMSTRONG, however, has managed it with judgment. He begins with a scientific topic, necessary as a foundation for the perceptive

part which is to follow—the circulation of the blood. This function, however, admits of easy illustration from the common principles of hydraulics, as displayed in the motion of water through pipes and channels. The constant waste of solid particles that such a perpetual current must produce, demonstrates the necessity for a new supply by means of somewhat taken in. Hence naturally follows the consideration of food, its concoction, and the choice of aliments, solid and fluid, suited to persons of different constitutions, and in different climates. This is the general plan of the book. The poet's skill consists in taking the subject out of the language and reasonings of science, familiarising it by apt illustration, and diversifying it by amusing digression. All this he has attempted, and with success.

We shall not closely follow his steps while he treats of the digestibility and salubriousness of different foods, and lays down rules for the regulation of appetite. The subject, as we before hinted, is not

of the most pleasing kind, and it is apparently rather from necessity than choice that he enters into it. His expressions and images are strong, but strength so employed is unavoidably a-kin to coarseness. A more agreeable topic is the praise of temperance and simple diet, from which he easily slides into a beautiful moral passage, shewing how much better riches may be employed than in the luxuries of the table—by relieving indigence and unfriended merit. One line is almost unrivalled in pathetic energy.

Tho' hush'd in patient wretchedness at home.

The opposite evils arising from too full and too scanty a diet are next enumerated, and cautions are given respecting the progress from one to the other. The different regimen proper for the several seasons of the year is then touched upon ; and this naturally leads the poet to open a new source of variety in description, derived from a view of human life as subsisting in climates removed to the two extremes from our own. The picture of the frigid zone is

but slightly sketched ; that of the torrid regions is much more minute, and will strongly remind the reader of a similar one by the hand of THOMSON ; but I dare not assert that it will lose nothing by the comparison. It is rendered less appropriate, by the enumeration of vegetable articles which in reality belong to very different climates ; the cocoa and anana being many degrees separated from the countries rich in corn and wine. The cedar of Lebanon, likewise, as a native of the bleak tops of high mountains, ought not to be placed by the side of the palm and plantain.

The succeeding passage, however, which paints the wonders of the Naiad kingdom, though it also has its parallel in the *Seasons*, is not, I think, surpassed by that, or any other poem, in strength and grandeur of description. The awful sublimity of the scenes themselves; and the artifice of the poet in introducing himself as a spectator, and marking the supposed impressions on his own mind, elevate this piece to the very summit of descriptive poetry.

The praise of water-drinking follows ; with the precepts of the father of physic for choosing rightly this pure and innocent beverage. Notwithstanding the apparent earnestness with which the poet dwells on this topic, there is some reason to suspect that he was not quite hearty in the cause. For he not only adopts the notion of those who have recommended an occasional debauch as a salutary spur to nature ; but, descanting on the necessity a man may find himself under to practice hard drinking in order to promote the pursuits of ambition or avarice, he advises him (between jest and earnest) to enure himself to the trial by slow degrees. Here the physician and sage seem lost in the jolly companion. He soon, however, resumes those characters ; and after remarking the tendency of a continued use of wine to bring on premature old age, he digresses into a theoretical account of the process by which the animal machine is gradually impeded in its motions, and at length comes to a full stop. This conducts him to a striking

termination of the book, in a lofty description of the ravages made by time upon the works of human art, and the world itself.

Exercise, the subject of the third book, is a theme more adapted to poetry, and less immersed in professional disquisitions, than that of the preceding. Its benefits in the preservation of health are universally known; and the poet's task is rather to frame upon it pictures agreeable to the imagination, than to treat of it in a closely preceptive or scientific manner. Dr. ARMSTRONG begins with a lively portrait of the rustic, rendered firm and robust by toil, like a sturdy oak of the forest; and he produces him as a specimen of the influence of exercise on the human frame. He then exhorts the votary of health to partake of the various kinds of rural pastime, the walk in all seasons, the chace, and the sport of fishing. This last amusement introduces a very pleasing passage, in which the poet characterises various streams, particularly the Liddel, on whose pastoral

banks he first drew breath. The tribute of affection he pays to his native place, and the retrospect of his own boyish years, are sweetly interesting, and vie with all that THOMSON and SMOLLET have written on a similar topic.

The species of exercise afforded by gardening, gives occasion to a moral picture, of a man retired from public life to the cultivation of his estate, surrounded with a select society of old companions, of the same tastes and pursuits with himself. This is wrought so much in the manner of THOMSON, that, were it not for some difference of style, it might pass undistinguished as a passage of the Seasons. The “noctes coenæque deum” of HORACE, have contributed to adorn the piece.

Resuming the medical consideration of exercise, he next adverts to its power in strengthening weak parts by habitual exertions; and he dwells on the propriety of a gradual progress from rest to labour, and on the mischiefs attending too violent and heed-

less toils. This leads him to a serious and pathetic apostrophe on the fatal effects proceeding from exposure to cold, or draughts of cold liquor, when heated, which he represents as the most frequent of all causes of mortal disease. The ancient use of warm baths and unctious after exercise is his next topic, in speaking of which, he finds it necessary to touch upon that important function of the body, insensible perspiration. The strict connection of this with health and disease, according as it is regular or deranged, has been a favourite argument with certain medical schools, and is here briefly illustrated in poetical language. The use of cold bathing in steeling the frame against the inclemencies of a cold climate, and the advantages of frequent ablution in hot ones, and of cleanliness in all, are further subjects of digression.

He returns to the consideration of exercise, as it is limited by recurring changes of the day and year; warning against it while the body is loaded with

food, and during the heats of a summer's noon, and the chills of evening. These preceptive remarks lead him to a vein more fertile of ideas addressed to the imagination; for, conceiving the day to be sunk into the silence and gloom of midnight, he views the toil-spent hind, wrapt in the arms of profound repose, the sweet soother of his labours. Hence he digresses to the subject of dreams, and paints in vivid colours the horrid scenes that disturb the mind during the delirium of unquiet slumber. The proper period in which sleep is to be indulged, with its due measure to different constitutions are next considered. The influence of habit in this respect, brings on an exhortation to proceed very gradually in altering every corporeal habit; and this is made an introduction to a description of the successive changes of the year, with the distempers they bring. All this, and the remainder of the book, might perhaps with greater propriety have made a part of the first head; since its connection with exercise is less obvious than

with air. To introduce in some part of his plan an account of epidemic diseases was however, evidently proper, both as matter for important instruction respecting the preservation of health, and as affording scope for poetical variety. After some common observations on the diseases of Spring and Autumn, and the means of guarding against them, with a forcible injunction against delay as soon as symptoms of danger appear ; the poet proceeds to an imitation of VIRGIL and LUCRETIUS in the particular description of a pestilence ; and he very happily chooses for his subject the Sweating-Sickness which prevailed first in England when the EARL OF RICHMOND, afterwards HENRY VII. came hither on his expedition against the tyrant RICHARD. So many graphical descriptions in prose and verse have been made of visitations of this kind, that scarcely any source of novelty remained in the *general* circumstances accompanying them. Dr. ARMSTRONG has therefore judiciously introduced as much as possible of the

particular character of this singular distemper, which, as far as we learn, was entirely unknown before, and has never appeared since, that period. He has not even rejected certain popular errors prevalent respecting it, which, though they ought carefully to be avoided in a medical treatise, may perhaps be permitted to enhance the wonder of a poetical narration. Such is that, which asserts Englishmen to have been its only victims, both in their own country and abroad—a notion which certainly adds to the interest with which a native of this country reads the relation. The conclusion of this book is a close copy from VIRGIL in the design, suitably varied in the circumstances. The deaths beyond the Atlantic allude to the unfortunate expedition to Carthagena, a popular topic of complaint at that period.

The title with which the fourth and last book is inscribed, is *the Passions*; but its subject would be more accurately expressed by the influence of the mind over the body—a large and elevated topic, de-

tached from the technical matter of any particular profession, and in its full extent comprising every thing sublime and affecting in moral poetry. The theory of the union of a spiritual principle with the gross corporeal substance, is that which the writer adopts as the basis of his reasonings. It is this ruling power which

Wields at his will the dull material world,
And is the body's health or malady.

He evidently confounds, however, (as all writers on this system do) matter of great subtilty, with what is not matter—or spirit. These “viewless atoms,” he says, “are lost in thinking,” yet thought itself is not the enemy of life, but painful thinking, such as that proceeding from anxious studies, and fretful emotions. To prevent the baneful effects of these, he counsels us frequently to vary our objects, and to join the bodily exercise of reading aloud, to the mental labour of meditation. Solitary brooding over thoughts of a particular kind, such, especially,

as pride or fear presents to the imagination, is warned against, in a passage full of energy, as the usual parent of madness or melancholy. Sometimes what the poet terms a *chronic passion*, or one arising from a misfortune which has made a lasting impression, such as the loss of a beloved friend, produces a sympathetic languor in the body, which can only be removed by shifting the scene, and plunging in amusement or business. Some persons, however, take a less innocent method of dispelling grief,

and in the tempting bowl

Of poison'd nectar, sweet oblivion swill.

The immediately exhilarating effects, and the sad subsequent reverse attending this baneful practice, are here painted in the most vivid colouring, and form a highly instructive and pathetic lesson. Particularly, the gradual degradation of character which it infallibly brings on, is finely touched.

A kind of moral lecture succeeds, introduced as the supposed precepts of a sage in human life, whose

character is represented as a compound of manly sense and cheerfulness. How to acquire happiness by moderation in the pursuit of pleasure, and by the practice of virtue, is the topic of this passage, which, though certainly digressive, has, however a natural affinity with the leading subject of the book. Virtue has seldom been characterized with more spirit and dignity ; and trite as the sentiments are, the energy with which they are expressed commands attention.

The poet next reverts to his more direct purpose, that of considering the passions in their influence upon bodily health. In general, he lays it down as a rule, that all emotions which are pleasing to the mind, are also salutary to the body. But there are exceptions, some being in their nature prone to hurtful excess ; as an instance of which he gives the passion of Love. Here, again, he tries his strength with THOMSON, and his description cannot but remind the reader of that fine picture of a

love-sick youth, drawn by this writer in his Spring. THOMSON, however, dwells much more minutely on the mental effects of love. ARMSTRONG, with propriety, fixes the attention more on the changes it induces in the corporeal frame, and this, both as it is a passion, and as it leads to sensual indulgences. With great force, yet with sufficient delicacy, he paints the condition of one unnerved and exhausted by excess in amorous delights. This, indeed, is deviating from the express subject of the book; since love as a passion, and the appetite for sexual enjoyment, are distinct things, the latter being certainly able to subsist without the former, if not the former without the latter. But an insensible gradation led him easily from the one to the other.

The passion of Anger is his next theme, and the bold personification with which he has introduced it, is admirably suited to its violent and precipitate character. A fit of rage has frequently been known at once to overpower the vital faculties, and strike

with instant death. To guard against it was therefore a point of peculiar importance ; and the poet has presented many striking moral arguments against the indulgence of that habit which makes us prone to ungoverned fallies of this passion. But where reason proves too weak for the controul of this and other unruly affections of the mind, to what other power shall we resort for aid ? We may, (he hints) oppose passion to passion, and extinguish one by its opposite. But without dwelling on this contrivance (which, indeed, is neither very philosophical nor manageable) he proceeds to recognize a power in Nature which may be rendered the universal tranquillizer of the breast ; and this power is Music. With a contrasted description of the music which exercises this sympathetic dominion over the emotions, and that which is only the execution of difficult trifles, followed by an allusion to the fabulous stories of some ancient masters, and the praise of the art itself, the poet somewhat abruptly, closes the book and the work.

From this cursory view of the contents of Dr. ARMSTRONG's piece, it will probably appear, that together with a sufficient variety for the purpose of amusement, there is uniformity of design enough to constitute the proper character of a didactic poem. Almost every thing essential to the preservation of health is touched upon during its course; and the digressive parts are neither wholly impertinent to the main object, nor do they occupy a disproportionate space. Many topics of an elevated nature are occasionally introduced; and moral sentiment is agreeably interwoven with precept and description. The writer has, apparently, found some difficulty in adhering to the arrangement of his design; for neither are the proposed topics of the four books equally copious of matter, nor has he with precision confined himself to the subjects belonging to each. However, as the *real* intention of such a work is not to afford systematic instruction, but to impress the mind with detached particulars, and to

amuse it with variety, objections in point of method are little to be regarded. If this performance on the whole offers a fund of useful advice and rational entertainment to every cultivated reader, and at the same time is in a good degree what it professes to be, it has fulfilled its purpose.

It now remains to consider how far this work is characterised by any peculiarity of style and manner.

English blank verse in its structure approaches so nearly to prose, that they who have employed it on elevated subjects, have adopted a variety of methods to give it the stamp of poetry. Some have transplanted as much as possible of the idiom of the ancient languages into their own. They have used words in uncommon senses, derived rather from etymology than practice; and in the formation of sentences, they have studiously deviated from the natural order, and copied the involutions and inversions of the Latin and Greek. Others have enriched their style with novel terms and compound

epithets, and have aimed at an uncommon mode of saying the commonest things. Very different from these is the manner of ARMSTRONG. It is distinguished by its simplicity—by a free use of words which owe their strength to their plainness—by the rejection of ambitious ornaments, and a near approach to common phraseology. His sentences are generally short and easy, his sense clear and obvious. The full extent of his conceptions is taken at the first glance ; and there are no lofty mysteries to be unravelled by repeated perusal. What keeps his language from being prosaic, is the vigour of his sentiments. He thinks boldly, feels strongly, and therefore expresses himself poetically. Where the subject sinks, his style sinks with it ; but he has for the most part excluded topics incapable either of vivid description, or of the oratory of sentiment. He had from nature a musical ear, whence his lines scarcely ever harsh, and are usually melodious, though apparently without much study to render

them so. Perhaps he has not been careful enough to avoid the monotony of making several successive lines close with a rest or pause in the sense. On the whole, it may not be too much to assert that no writer in blank verse can be found more free from stiffness and affectation, more energetic without harshness, and more dignified without formality.



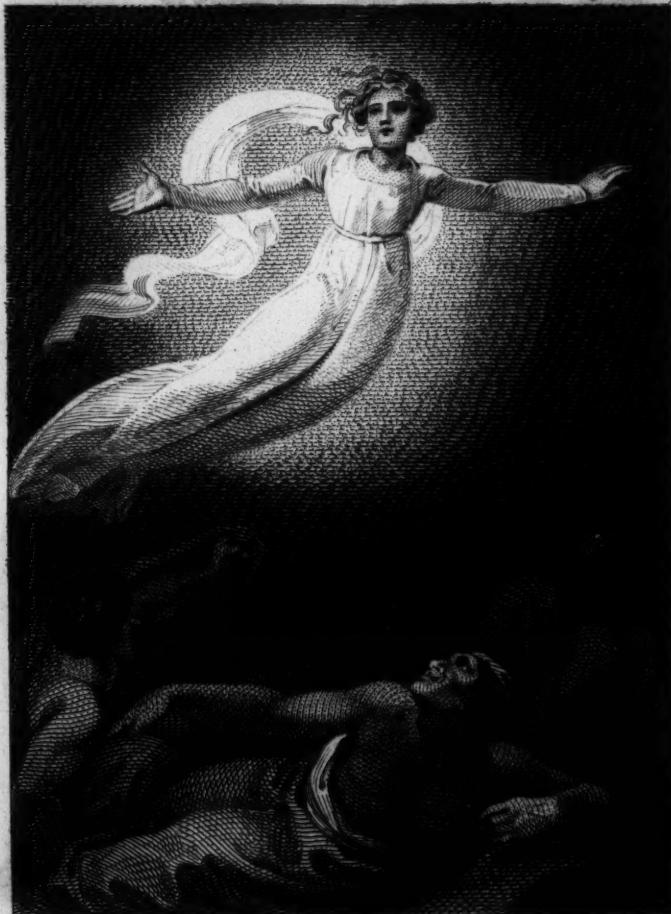
the same time, the soil and the vegetation, and many
other natural features, which have been called "the face of
the earth." These natural changes are due either to the action
of natural forces or else they are due to man's
action, and between them there exist important differences.
The former are called "natural changes," the latter
"artificial changes."

J. G. D.

THE
FIRST BOOK
OF THE
ART OF PRESERVING HEALTH.

A I R.

D



T. Stothard R.A. del.

J. Neagle sculp.

*When thro' the blue Serenity of Heaven
Thy Power approaches, all the wasteful Host
Of Pain and Sickness, squalid and deform'd
Confounded sink into the loathsome gloom.*

THE
ART
OF
PRESERVING HEALTH.

BOOK I.

A I R.

DAUGHTER of Pæon, queen of every joy,
HYGEIA *; whose indulgent smile sustains
The various race luxuriant nature pours,
And on th' immortal essences bestows
Immortal youth ; auspicious, O descend ! 5
Thou cheerful guardian of the rolling year,

* Hygeia, the Goddess of Health, was, according to the genealogy of the heathen deities, the daughter of *Æsculapius* ; who, as well as Apollo, was distinguished by the name of Pæon.

Whether thou wanton'ſt on the western gale,
Or ſhak'ſt the rigid pinions of the north,
Diffuſeſt life and vigour thro' the tracts
Of air, thro' earth, and ocean's deep domain. 10

When thro' the blue ſerenity of heaven
Thy power approaches, all the wasteful hoſt
Of Pain and Sickneſs, ſqualid and deform'd,
Confounded ſink into the loathſome gloom,
Where in deep Erebus involv'd the Fiends 15

Grow more profane. Whatever shapes of death,
Shook from the hideous chambers of the globe,
Swarm thro' the ſhuddering air : whatever plagues
Or meagre famine breeds, or with ſlow wings
Rife from the putrid wat'ry element, 20

The damp waste forest, motionless and rank,
That smothers earth, and all the breathleſs winds,
Or the vile carnage of th' inhuman field ;
Whatever baneful breathes the rotten ſouth ;
Whatever illſ th' extremes or ſudden change 25

Of cold and hot, or moist and dry produce ;

They fly thy pure effulgence : they and all
The secret poisons of avenging Heaven,
And all the pale tribes halting in the train
Of Vice and heedless Pleasure : or if aught 30
The comet's glare amid the burning sky,
Mournful eclipse, or planets ill-combin'd,
Portend disastrous to the vital world ;
Thy salutary power averts their rage,
Averts the general bane : and but for thee 35
Nature would ficken; nature soon would die.

Without thy cheerful active energy
No rapture swells the breast, no Poet sings,
No more the maids of Helicon delight.
Come then with me, O Goddess heavenly gay ! 40
Begin the song ; and let it sweetly flow,
And let it wisely teach thy wholesome laws :
“ How best the fickle fabric to support
“ Of mortal man ; in healthful body how
“ A healthful mind the longest to maintain.” 45

'Tis hard, in such a strife of rules, to choose
The best, and those of most extensive use ;
Harder in clear and animated song
Dry philosophic precepts to convey.
Yet with thy aid the secret wilds I trace 50
Of nature, and with daring steps proceed
Thro' paths the Muses never trod before.

Nor should I wander doubtful of my way
Had I the lights of that sagacious mind
Which taught to check the pestilential fire, 55
And quell the deadly Python of the Nile.
O thou belov'd by all the graceful arts,
Thou long the fav'rite of the healing powers,
Indulge, O MEAD ! a well-design'd essay,
Howe'er imperfect : and permit that I 60
My little knowledge with my country share,
Till you the rich Asclepian stores unlock,
And with new graces dignify the theme.

YE who amid this feverish world would wear
A body free of pain, of cares a mind ; 65
Fly the rank city, shun its turbid air ;
Breathe not the chaos of eternal smoke
And volatile corruption, from the dead,
The dying, sick'ning, and the living world
Exhal'd, to fully heaven's transparent dome 70
With dim mortality. It is not Air
That from a thousand lungs reeks back to thine,
Sated with exhalations rank and fell,
The spoil of dunghills, and the putrid thaw
Of nature ; when from shape and texture she 75
Relapses into fighting elements :
It is not Air, but floats a nauseous mass
Of all obscene, corrupt, offensive things.
Much moisture hurts ; but here a Fordid bath,
With oily rancour fraught, relaxes more 80
The solid frame than simple moisture can.
Besides, immur'd in many a fullen bay
That never felt the freshness of the breeze,

This flumb'ring Deep remains, and ranker grows
With sickly rest : and (tho' the lungs abhor 85
To drink the dun fuliginous abyſs)
Did not the acid vigour of the mine,
Roll'd from so many thund'ring chimneys, tame
The putrid steams that overwarm the sky ;
This caustic venom would perhaps corrode 90
Those tender cells that draw the vital air,
In vain with all their unctuous rills bedew'd ;
Or by the drunken venous tubes, that yawn
In countless pores o'er all the pervious skin
Imbib'd, would poison the balsamic blood, 95
And rouse the heart to every fever's rage.
While yet you breathe, away ; the rural wilds
Invite ; the mountains call you, and the vales ;
The woods, the streams, and each ambrosial breeze
That fans the ever-undulating sky ; 100
A kindly sky ! whose fost'ring power regales
Man, beast, and all the vegetable reign.
Find then some woodland scene where nature smiles

Benign, where all her honest children thrive.

To us there wants not many a happy Seat ! 105

Look round the smiling land, such numbers rise

We hardly fix, bewilder'd in our choice.

See where enthron'd in adamantine state,

Proud of her bards, imperial Windsor sits ;

There choose thy seat, in some aspiring grove 110

Fast by the slowly-winding Thames ; or where

Broader she laves fair Richmond's green retreats,

(Richmond that sees an hundred villas rise

Rural or gay). O ! from the summer's rage

O ! wrap me in the friendly gloom that hides 115

Umbrageous Ham !—But if the busy Town

Attract thee still to toil for power or gold,

Sweetly thou may'st thy vacant hours possess

In Hampstead, courted by the western wind ;

Or Greenwich, waving o'er the winding flood ;

Or lose the world amid the sylvan wilds

121

Of Dulwich, yet by barbarous arts unspoil'd.

Green rise the Kentish hills in cheerful air ;

But on the marshy plains that Lincoln spreads
Build not, nor rest too long thy wand'ring feet.

For on a rustic throne of dewy turf, 126

With baneful fogs her aching temples bound,

Quartana there presides : a meagre Fiend

Begot by Eurus, when his brutal force

Compress'd the slothful Naiad of the Fens.

From such a mixture sprung, this fitful pest 131

With fev'rish blasts subdues the sick'ning land :

Cold tremors come, with mighty love of rest,

Convulsive yawnings, lassitude, and pains

That sting the burden'd brows, fatigue the loins,

And rack the joints and every torpid limb ; 136

Then parching heat succeeds, till copious sweats

O'erflow : a short relief from former ills.

Beneath repeated shocks the wretches pine ;

The vigour sinks, the habit melts away ; 140

The cheerful, pure, and animated bloom

Dies from the face, with squalid atrophy

Devour'd, in fallow melancholy clad.

And oft the Sorceress, in her fated wrath,
Resigns them to the furies of her train ; 145
The bloated Hydrops, and the yellow Fiend
Ting'd with her own accumulated gall.

In quest of Sites, avoid the mournful plain
Where osiers thrive, and trees that love the lake ;
Where many lazy muddy rivers flow : 150
Nor for the wealth that all the Indies roll
Fix near the marshy margin of the main.
For from the humid soil and wat'ry reign
Eternal vapours rise ; the spongy air
For ever weeps : or, turgid with the weight 155
Of waters, pours a sounding deluge down.
Skies such as these let every mortal shun
Who dreads the dropsy, palsey, or the gout,
Tertian, corrosive scurvy, or moist catarrh ;
Or any other injury that grows 160
From raw-spun fibres idle and unstrung,
Skin ill-perspiring, and the purple flood
In languid eddies loitering into phlegm.

Yet not alone from humid skies we pine ;
For Air may be too dry. The subtle heaven, 165
That winnows into dust the blasted downs,
Bare and extended wide without a stream,
Too fast imbibes th' attenuated lymph
Which, by the furface, from the blood exhales.
The lungs grow rigid, and with toil essay 170
Their flexible vibrations ! or inflam'd,
Their tender ever-moving structure thaws.
Spoil'd of its limpid vehicle, the blood
A mass of lees remains, a droffy tide
That flow as Lethe wanders thro' the veins ; 175
Unactive in the services of life,
Unfit to lead its pitchy current thro',
The secret mazy channels of the brain.
The melancholic fiend (that worst despair
Of physic), hence the rust-complexion'd man 180
Pursues, whose blood is dry, whose fibres gain
Too stretch'd a tone : and hence in climes adust
So sudden tumults seize the trembling nerves,
And burning fevers glow with double rage.

Fly, if you can, these violent extremes 185
Of Air ; the wholesome is nor moist nor dry.
But as the power of choosing is deny'd
To half mankind, a further task ensues ;
How best to mitigate these fell extremes,
How breathe unhurt the withering element, 190
Or hazy atmosphere : tho' Custom moulds
To ev'ry clime the soft Promethean clay ;
And he who first the fogs of Essex breath'd
(So kind is native air) may in the fens
Of Essex from inveterate ills revive 195
At pure Montpelier or Bermuda caught.
But if the raw and oozy heaven offend ;
Correct the soil, and dry the sources up
Of wat'ry exhalation ; wide and deep
Conduct your trenches thro' the quaking bog ; 200
Solicitous, with all your winding arts,
Betray th' unwilling lake into the stream ;
And weed the forest, and invoke the winds
To break the toils where strangled vapours lie ;

- Or thro' the thickets send the crackling flames.
Meantime at home with cheerful fires dispel 206
The humid air : and let your table smoke
With solid roast or bak'd ; or what the herds
Of tamer breed supply ; or what the wilds
Yield to the toilsome pleasures of the chase. 210
Generous your wine, the boast of ripening years ;
But frugal be your cups : the languid frame,
Vapid and funk from yesterday's debauch,
Shrinks from the cold embrace of wat'ry heavens.
But neither these, nor all Apollo's arts, 215
Disarm the dangers of the dropping sky,
Unless with exercise and manly toil
You brace your nerves, and spur the lagging blood.
The fat'ning clime let all the sons of ease
Avoid ; if indolence would wish to live. 220
Go, yawn and loiter out the long slow year
In fairer skies. If droughty regions parch
The skin and lungs, and bake the thickening blood ;
Deep in the waving forest choose your seat.

Where fuming trees refresh the thirsty air ; 225

And wake the fountains from their secret beds,

And into lakes dilate the rapid stream.

Here spread your gardens wide ; and let the cool,

The moist relaxing vegetable store

Prevail in each repast : your food supplied 230

By bleeding life, be gently wasted down,

By soft decoction and a mellowing heat,

To liquid balm ; or, if the solid mass

You choose, tormented in the boiling wave ;

That thro' the thirsty channels of the blood 235

A smooth diluted chyle may ever flow.

The fragrant dairy from its cool recess

Its nectar acid or benign will pour

To drown your thirst ; or let the mantling bowl

Of keen sherbet the fickle taste relieve. 240

For with the viscous blood the simple stream

Will hardly mingle ; and fermented cups

Oft dissipate more moisture than they give.

Yet when pale seasons rise, or Winter rolls

His horrors o'er the world, thou may'st indulge
In feasts more genial, and impatient broach 246
The mellow cask. Then too the scourging air
Provokes to keener toils than fultry droughts
Allow. But rarely we such skies blaspheme.
Steep'd in continual rains, or with raw fogs 250
Bedew'd, our seasons droop : incumbent still
A ponderous heaven o'erwhelms the sinking soul.
Lab'ring with storms in heapy mountains rise
Th' im battled clouds, as if the Stygian shades
Had left the dungeon of eternal night. 255
Till black with thunder all the South descends.
Scarce in a showerles day the heavens indulge
Our melting clime ; except the baleful East
Withers the tender spring, and sourly checks
The fancy of the year. Our fathers talk 260
Of summers, balmy airs, and skies serene.
Good Heaven ! for what unexpiated crimes
This dismal change ! the brooding elements,
Do they, your powerful ministers of wrath,

Prepare some fierce exterminating plague ? 265

Or is it fix'd in the decrees above

That lofty Albion melt into the main ?

Indulgent Nature ! O dissolve this gloom !

Bind in eternal adamant the winds

That drown or wither : give the genial West 270

To breathe, and in its turn the sprightly North :

And may once more the circling seasons rule

The year ; not mix in every monstrous day.

Meantime, the moist malignity to shun 274

Of burthen'd skies; mark where the dry champaign

Swells into cheerful hills ; where marjoram

And thyme, the love of bees, perfume the air ;

And where the * Cynorrhodon with the rose

For fragrance vies ; for in the thirsty soil

Most fragrant breathe the aromatic tribes. X 280

There bid thy roofs high on the basking steep

Ascend, there light thy hospitable fires.

* The wild rose, or that which grows on the common briar.

And let them see the Winter morn arise,
The Summer evening blushing in the West ;
While with umbrageous oaks the ridge behind 285

O'erhung, defends you from the blust'ring North,
And bleak affliction of the peevish East.

O ! when the growling winds contend, and all
The sounding forest fluctuates in the storm ;
To sink in warm repose, and hear the din 290
Howl o'er the steady battlements, delights
Above the luxury of vulgar sleep.
The murmuring rivulet, and the hoarser strain
Of waters rushing o'er the slippery rocks,
Will nightly lull you to ambrosial rest. 295

To please the fancy is no trifling good,
Where health is studied ; for whatever moves
The mind with calm delight, promotes the just
And natural movements of th' harmonious frame.
Besides, the sportive brook for ever shakes 300
The trembling air ; that floats from hill to hill
From vale to mountain, with incessant change

Of purest element, refreshing still
Your airy seat, and uninfected gods.

Chiefly for this I praise the man who builds
High on the breezy ridge, whose lofty sides
Th' ethereal deep with endless billows chafes.

His purer mansion nor contagious years
Shall reach, nor deadly putrid airs annoy.

But may no fogs, from lake or fenny plain, 310
Involve my hill ! and wheresoe'er you build,
Whether on sun-burnt Epsom, or the plains
Wash'd by the silent Lee; in Chelsea low,
Or high Blackheath with win'try winds assail'd ;
Dry be your house : but airy more than warm. 315
Else every breath of ruder wind will strike
Your tender body thro' with rapid pains ;
Fierce coughs will teize you, hoarseness bind your voice,
Or moist Gravedo load your aching brows.
These to defy, and all the fates that dwell 320
In cloister'd air tainted with steaming life,

Let lofty ceilings grace your ample rooms ;
And still at azure noontide may your dome
At every window drink the liquid sky.

Need we the sunny situation here,

325

And theatres open to the South, commend ?

Here, where the morning's misty breath infests
More than the torrid noon ? How sickly grow,
How pale, the plants in those ill-fated vales
That, circled round with the gigantic heap
Of mountains, never felt, nor ever hope
To feel, the genial vigour of the sun !

While on the neighbouring hill the rose inflames
The verdant Spring ; in virgin beauty blows

The tender lily, languishingly sweet ;

335

O'er every hedge the wanton woodbine roves,
And Autumn ripens in the Summer's ray.

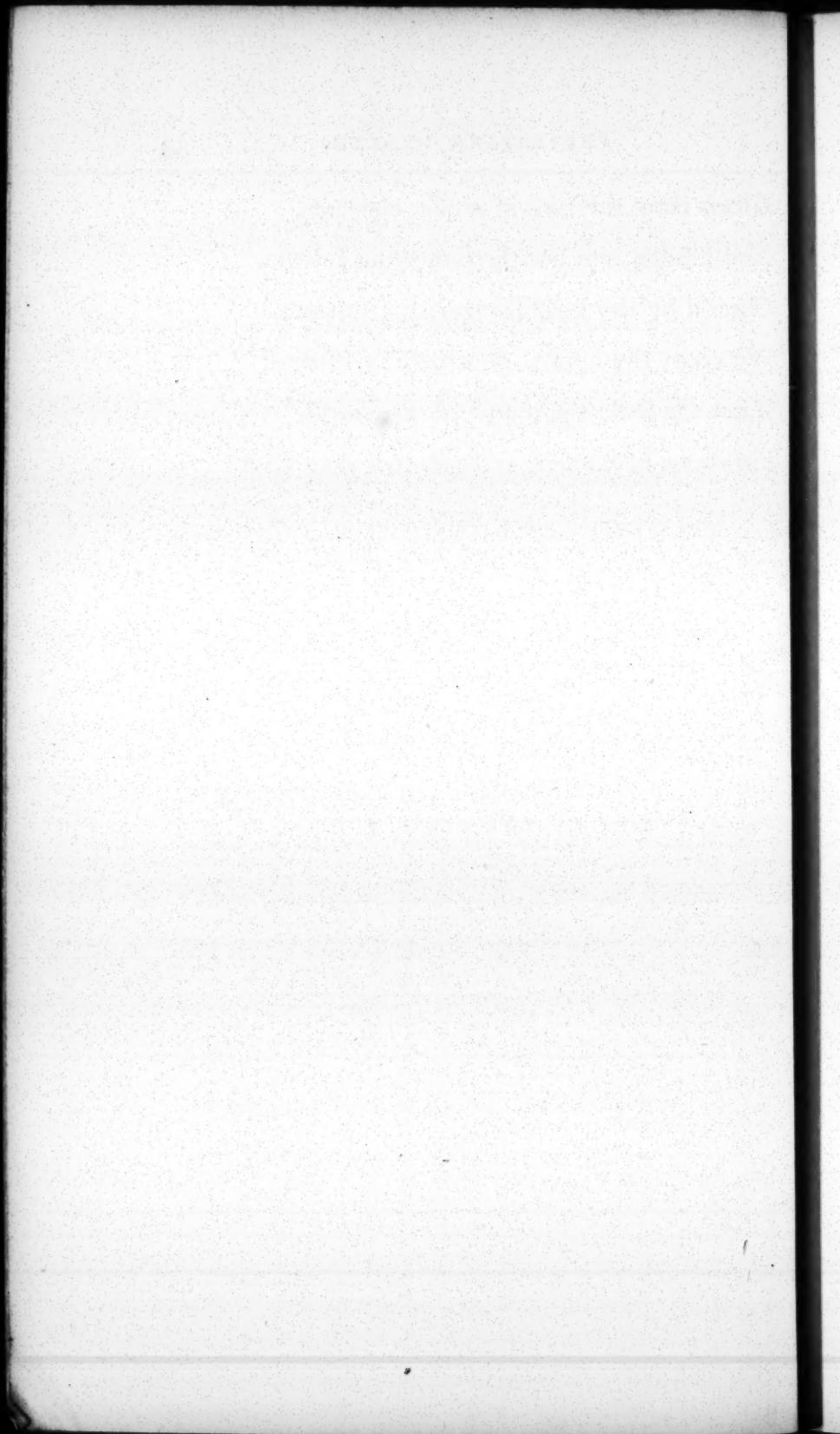
Nor less the warmer living tribes demand

The fost'ring sun : whose energy divine

Dwells not in mortal fire ; whose gen'rous heat 34

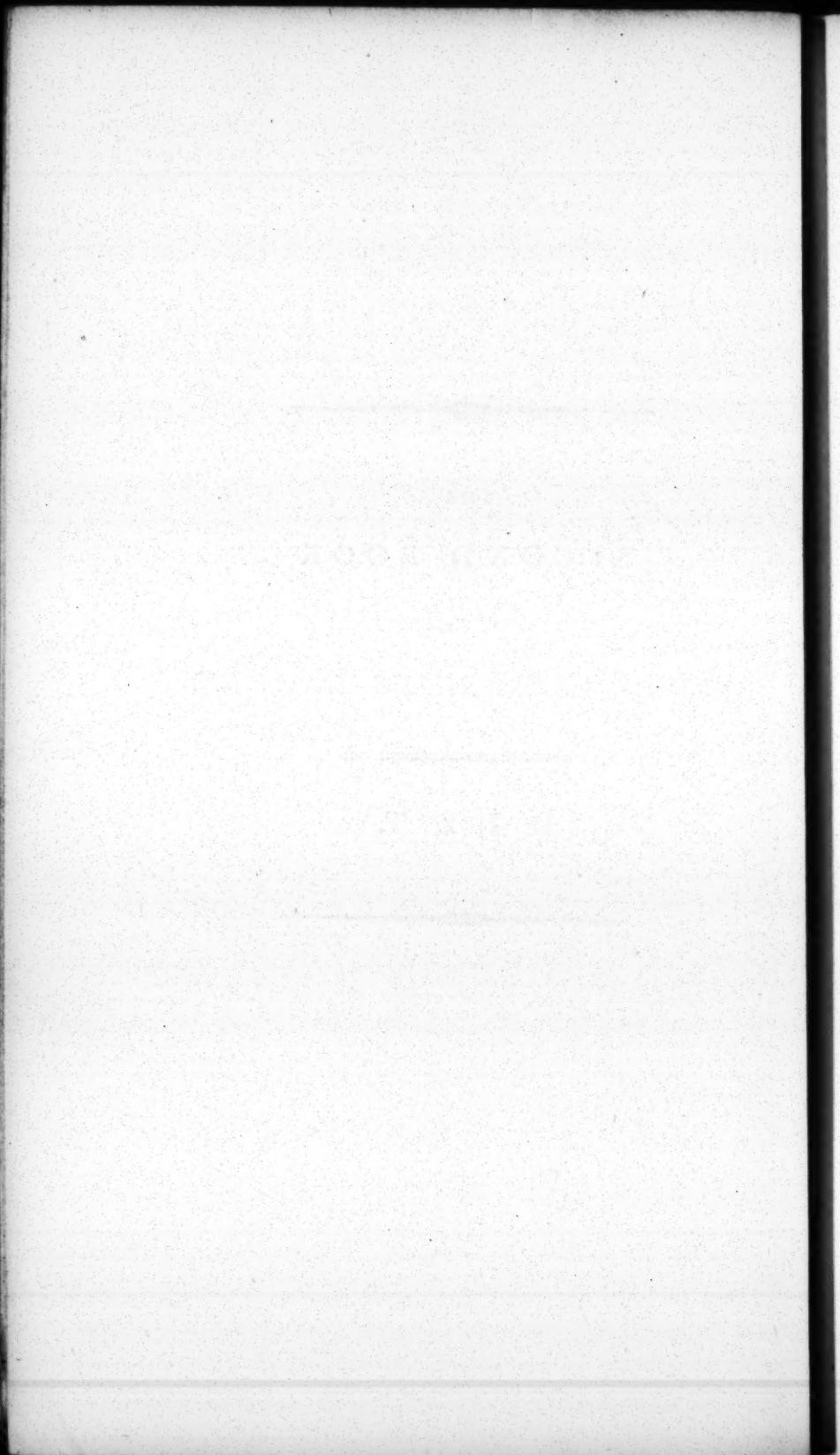
Glows thro' the mass of grosser elements,
And kindles into life the ponderous spheres.
Cheer'd by thy kind invigorating warmth,
We court thy beams, great majesty of day !
If not the soul, the regent of this world, 345
First-born of heaven, and only less than God !

END OF THE FIRST BOOK.



THE
SECOND BOOK
OF THE
ART OF PRESERVING HEALTH.

D I E T.



THE
A R T
OF
PRESERVING HEALTH.

B O O K II.

D I E T.

ENOUGH of Air. A desart subject now,
Rougher and wilder, rises to my sight.
A barren waste, where not a garland grows
To bind the Muse's brow ; not ev'n a proud
Stupendous solitude frowns o'er the heath, 5
To rouse a noble horror in the soul :
But rugged paths fatigue, and error leads
Thro' endless labyrinths the devious feet.
Farewel, ethereal fields ! the humbler arts

Of life ; the Table and the homely Gods
Demand my song, Elysian gales, adieu !

10

The blood, the fountain whence the spirits flow,
The generous stream that waters every part,
And motion, vigour, and warm life conveys
To every particle that moves or lives ; 15
This vital fluid, thro' unnumber'd tubes
Pour'd by the heart, and to the heart again
Refund'd ; scourg'd for ever round and round ;
Enrag'd with heat and toil, at last forgets
Its balmy nature ; virulent and thin 20
It grows ; and now, but that a thousand gates
Are open to its flight, it would destroy
The parts it cherish'd and repair'd before.
Besides, the flexible and tender tubes
Melt in the mildest most nectareous tide 25
That ripening nature rolls ; as in the stream
Its crumbling banks ; but what the vital force
Of plastic fluids hourly batters down,
That very force, those plastic particles

20

25

Rebuild : so mutable the state of man.

30

For this the watchful appetite was given,

Daily with fresh materials to repair

This unavoidable expence of life,

This necessary waste of flesh and blood.

Hence the concoctive powers, with various art,

Subdue the cruder aliments to chyle ;

36

The chyle to blood ; the foamy purple tide

To liquors, which thro' finer arteries

To different parts their winding course pursue ;

To try new changes, and new forms put on, 40

Or for the public, or some private use.

Nothing so foreign but th' athletic hind

Can labour into blood. The hungry meal

Alone he fears, or aliments too thin ;

By violent powers too easily subdu'd,

45

Too soon expell'd. His daily labour thaws,

To friendly chyle, the most rebellious mass

That salt can harden, or the smoke of years ;

Nor does his gorge the luscious bacon rue,
Nor that which Cestria sends, tenacious paste 50
Of solid milk. But ye of softer clay,
Infirm and delicate ! and ye who waste
With pale and bloated sloth the tedious day !
Avoid the stubborn aliment, avoid
The full repast ; and let fagacious age 55
Grow wiser, lesson'd by the dropping teeth.

Half subtiliz'd to chyle, the liquid food
Readiest obeys th' assimilating powers ;
And soon the tender vegetable mass 59
Relents ; and soon the young of those that tread
The stedfast earth, or cleave the green abyss,
Or pathless sky. And if the steer must fall,
In youth and sanguine vigour let him die ;
Nor stay till rigid age, or heavy ails,
Absolve him ill-requited from the yoke. 65
Some with high forage, and luxuriant ease,
Indulge the veteran ox ; but wiser thou,

From the bald mountain or the barren downs,
Expect the flocks by frugal nature fed;
A race of purer blood, with exercise 70.
Refin'd and scanty fare : for, old or young,
The stall'd are never healthy ; nor the cramm'd,
Not all the culinary arts can tame,
To wholesome food, the abominable growth
Of rest and gluttony; the prudent taste 75
Rejects like bane such loathsome lusciousness.
The languid stomach curses even the pure
Delicious fat, and all the race of oil :
For more the oily aliments relax
Its feeble tone ; and with the eager lymph 80
(Fond to incorporate with all it meets)
Coily they mix, and shun with slippery wiles
The woo'd embrace. Th' irresoluble oil,
So gentle late and blandishing, in floods
Of rancid bile o'erflows : what tumults hence,
What horrors rise, were nauseous to relate. 86
Choose leaner viands, ye whose jovial make

Too fast the gummy nutriment imbibes :
Choose sober meals ; and rouse to active life
Your cumbrous clay ; nor on th' enfeebling down,
Irresolute, protract the morning hours. 91
But let the man whose bones are thinly clad,
With cheerful ease and succulent repast
Improve his habit if he can ; for each
Extreme departs from perfect sanity. 95

I could relate what table this demands
Or that complexion ; what the various powers
Of various foods : but fifty years would roll,
And fifty more before the tale were done.
Besides there often lurks some nameless, strange,
Peculiar thing ; nor on the skin display'd, 101
Felt in the pulse, nor in the habit seen ;
Which finds a poison in the food that most
The temp'rature affects. There are, whose blood
Impetuous rages thro' the turgid veins, 105
Who better bear the fiery fruits of Ind

Than the moist melon, or pale cucumber.

Of chilly nature others fly the board

Supply'd with slaughter, and the vernal powers

For cooler, kinder sustenance implore.

Some even the generous nutriment detest 110

Which, in the shell, the sleeping embryo rears.

Some, more unhappy still, repent the gifts

Of Pales ; soft, delicious and benign :

The balmy quintessence of every flower,

And every grateful herb that decks the spring ;

The fost'ring dew of tender sprouting life ; 116

The best refection of declining age ;

The kind restorative of those who lie

Half dead and panting, from the doubtful strife

Of nature struggling in the grasp of death. 120

Try all the bounties of this fertile globe,

There is not such a salutary food

As suits with every stomach. But (except,

Amid the mingled maws of fish and fowl,

And boil'd and bak'd, you hesitate by which 125

You sunk oppress'd, or whether not by all;)
Taught by experience soon you may discern
What pleases, what offends. Avoid the cates
That lull the ficken'd appetite too long;
Or heave with fev'rish flushings all the face, 130
Burn in the palms, and parch the rough'ning tongue;
Or much diminish or too much increase
Th' expence, which nature's wise œconomy,
Without or waste or avarice, maintains.
Such cates abjur'd, let prowling hunger loose, 135
And bid the curious palate roam at will;
They scarce can err amid the various stores
That burst the teeming entrails of the world.

Led by sagacious taste, the ruthless king
Of beasts on blood and slaughter only lives; 140
The tiger, form'd alike to cruel meals,
Would at the manger starve: of milder feeds
The generous horse to herbage and to grain
Confines his wish; tho' fabling Greece resound

The Thracian steeds with human carnage wild.

Prompted by instinct's never-er-ing power, 146

Each creature knows its proper aliment ;

But man, th' inhabitant of every clime,

With all the commoners of nature feeds.

Directed, bounded, by this power within, 150

Their cravings are well-aim'd : voluptuous man

Is by superior faculties misled ;

Misled from pleasure even in quest of joy.

Sated with nature's boons, what thousands seek,

With dishes tortur'd from their native taste, 155

And mad variety, to spur beyond

Its wiser will the jaded appetite !

Is this for pleasure ? Learn a juster taste ;

And know that temperance is true luxury.

Or is it pride ? Pursue some nobler aim. 160

Dismiss your parasites, who praise for hire ;

And earn the fair esteem of honest men,

Whose praise is fame. Form'd of such clay as yours,

The sick, the needy, shiver at your gates.

Even modest want may bleſs your hand unſeen,
Tho' hufh'd in patient wretchedneſs at home. 166
Is there no virgin, grac'd with ev'ry charm
But that which binds the mercenary vow ?
No youth of genius, whose neglected bloom
Unfoster'd ſickens in the barren shade ? 170
No worthy man, by fortune's random blows,
Or by a heart too generous and humane,
Conſtrain'd to leave his happy natal ſeat,
And ſigh for wants more bitter than his own ?
There are, while human miſeries abound, 175
A thouſand ways to waste ſuperfluouſ wealth,
Without one fool or flatterer at your board,
Without one hour of ſickneſs or diſgulf.

But other ill's th' ambiguous eaſt pursue,
Besides provoking the laſcivious taste. 180
Such various foods, tho' harmless each alone,
Each other violate ; and oft we ſee
What ſtrife is brew'd, and what pernicious bane,

From combinations of innoxious things.

Th' unbounded taste I mean not to confine 185
To hermit's diet needlesly severe.

But would you long the sweets of health enjoy,
Or husband pleasure ; at one impious meal
Exhaust not half the bounties of the year,
Of every realm. It matters not meanwhile 190
How much to-morrow differ from to-day ;
So far indulge : 'tis fit, besides, that man,
To change obnoxious, be to change inur'd.
But stay the curious appetite, and taste
With caution fruits you never tried before. 195
For want of use the kindest aliment
Sometimes offends ; while custom tames the rage
Of poison to mild amity with life.

180
So Heaven has formed us to the general taste
Of all its gifts ; so custom has improv'd 200
This bent of nature ; that few simple foods,
Of all that earth, or air, or ocean yield,

But by excess offend. Beyond the sense
Of light refection, at the genial board
Indulge not often ; nor protract the feast 205
To dull satiety ; till soft and slow
A drowsy death creeps on, th' expansive soul
Oppress'd, and smother'd the celestial fire.
The stomach, urg'd beyond its active tone,
Hardly to nutrimental chyle subdues 210
The softest food : unfinish'd and deprav'd,
The chyle, in all its future wanderings, owns
Its turbid fountain ; not by purer streams
So to be clear'd, but foulness will remain.
To sparkling wine what ferment can exalt 215
Th' unripen'd grape ? Or what mechanic skill
From the crude ore can spin the ductile gold ?

Gross riot treasures up a wealthy fund
Of plagues : but more immedicable ills
Attend the lean extreme. For physic knows 220
How to disburthen the too tumid veins,

Even how to ripen the half-labour'd blood :

But to unlock the elemental tubes,

Collaps'd and shrunk with long inanity,

And with balsamic nutriment repair

225

The dried and worn-out habit, were to bid

Old age grow green, and wear a second spring ;

Or the tall ash, long ravish'd from the foil,

Thro' wither'd veins imbibe the vernal dew.

When hunger calls, obey ; nor often wait

230

Till hunger sharpen to corrosive pain :

For the keen appetite will feast beyond

What nature well can bear ; and one extreme

Ne'er without danger meets its own reverse.

Too greedily th' exhausted veins absorb

235

The recent chyle, and load enfeebled powers

Oft to th' extinction of the vital flame.

To the pale cities, by the firm-set siege

And famine humbled, may this verse be borne ;

And hear, ye hardiest sons that Albion breeds, 240

Long tos'd and famish'd on the wintry main ;

The war shook off, or hospitable shore
Attain'd, with temperance bear the shock of joy ;
Nor crown with festive rites th' auspicious day :
Such feast might prove more fatal than the waves,
Than war or famine. While the vital fire 246
Burns feebly, heap not the green fuel on ;
But prudently foment the wandering spark
With what the soonest feeds its kindred touch :
Be frugal ev'n of that : a little give 250
At first ; that kindled, add a little more ;
Till, by deliberate nourishing, the flame
Reviv'd, with all its wonted vigour glows.

But tho' the two (the full and the jejune)
Extremes have each their vice ; it much avails 255
Ever with gentle tide to ebb and flow
From this to that : so nature learns to bear
Whatever chance or headlong appetite
May bring. Besides, a meagre day subdues
The cruder clods by sloth or luxury 260

Collected, and unloads the wheels of life.

Sometimes a coy aversion to the feast

Comes on, while yet no blacker omen lours;

Then is a time to shun the tempting board,

Were it your natal or your nuptial day. 265

Perhaps a fast so seasonable starves

The latent seeds of woe, which rooted once

Might cost you labour. But the day return'd

Of festal luxury, the wife indulge

Most in the tender vegetable breed: 270

Then chiefly when the summer beams inflame

The brazen heavens; or angry Sirius sheds

A feverish taint thro' the still gulph of air.

The moist cool viands then, and flowing cup

From the fresh dairy-virgin's liberal hand, 275

Will save your head from harm, tho' round the world

The dreaded * Causos roll his wasteful fires.

Pale humid Winter loves the generous board,

The meal more copious, and a warmer fare;

And longs with old wood and old wine to cheer 280

* The burning fever.

His quaking heart. The seasons which divide
Th' empires of heat and cold ; by neither claim'd,
Influenc'd by both ; a middle regimen
Impose. Thro' Autumn's languishing domain
Descending, nature by degrees invites 285
To glowing luxury. But from the depth
Of Winter when th' invigorated year
Emerges ; when Favonius, flush'd with love,
Toyful and young, in every breeze descends
More warm and wanton on his kindling bride ; 290
Then, shepherds, then begin to spare your flocks ;
And learn, with wise humanity, to check
The lust of blood. Now pregnant earth commits
A various offspring to the indulgent sky :
Now bounteous nature feeds with lavish hand 295
The prone creation ; yields what once suffic'd
Their dainty sovereign, when the world was young ;
Ere yet the barbarous thirst of blood had feiz'd
The human breast.—Each rolling month matures
The food that suits it most ; so does each clime. 300

Far in the horrid realms of Winter, where
Th' establish'd ocean heaps a monstrous waste
Of shining rocks and mountains to the pole,
There lives a hardy race, whose plainest wants

Relentless earth, their cruel step-mother, 305

Regards not. On the waste of iron fields,

Untam'd, intractable, no harvests wave :

Pomona hates them, and the clownish god
Who tends the garden. In this frozen world

Such cooling gifts were vain : a fitter meal 310

Is earn'd with ease ; for here the fruitful spawn

Of Ocean swarms, and heaps their genial board

With generous fare and luxury profuse.

These are their bread, the only bread they know :

These, and their willing slave the deer that crops

The shrubby herbage on their meagre hills. 316

Girt by the burning Zone, not thus the South

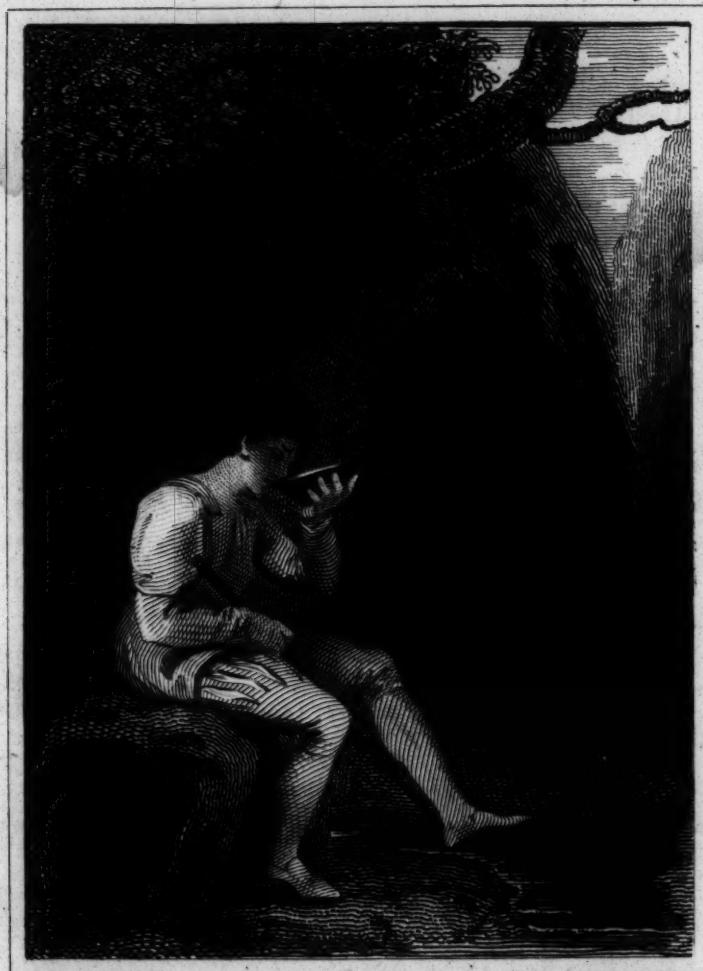
Her swarthy sons in either Ind maintains :

Or thirsty Libya ; from whose fervid loins

The lion bursts, and every fiend that roams 320

Th' affrighted wilderness. The mountain herd,
Aduft and dry, no sweet repast affords ;
Nor does the tepid main such kinds produce,
So perfect, so delicious, as the shoals
Of icy Zembla. Rashly where the blood 325
Brews feverish frays ; where scarce the tubes sustain
Its tumid fervour and tempestuous course ;
Kind nature tempts not to such gifts as these.
But here in livid ripeness melts the grape :
Here, finish'd by invigorating suns, 330
Thro' the green shade the golden orange glows :
Spontaneous here the turgid melon yields
A generous pulp : the cocoa swells on high
With milky riches ; and in horrid mail
The crisp ananas wraps its poignant sweets. 335
Earth's vaunted progeny : in ruder air
Too coy to flourish, even too proud to live ;
Or hardly rais'd by artificial fire
To vapid life. Here with a mother's smile
Glad Amalthea pours her copious horn. 340





T. Stothard R.A. pinxit.

J. Heath sculp't.

*O comfortable Streams! With eager Lips
And trembling Hand the languid, thirsty quaff
New Life in you;*

Here buxom Ceres reigns : th' autumnal sea
In boundless billows fluctuates o'er their plains.
What suits the climate best, what suits the men,
Nature profuses most, and most the taste
Demands. The fountain, edg'd with racy wine
Or acid fruit, bedews their thirsty souls. 346
The breeze eternal breathing round their limbs
Supports in else intolerable air :

While the cool palm, the plantain, and the grove
That waves on gloomy Lebanon, assuage 350
The torrid hell that beams upon their heads.

Now come, ye Naiads, to the fountains lead ;
Now let me wander thro' your gelid reign.
I burn to view th' enthusiastic wilds
By mortal else untrod. I hear the din 355
Of waters thund'ring o'er the ruin'd cliffs.
With holy reverence I approach the rocks
Whence glide the streams renown'd in ancient song.
Here from the desert down the rumbling steep

First springs the Nile ; here bursts the sounding Po
In angry waves ; Euphrates hence devolves 361
A mighty flood to water half the East ;
And there, in Gothic solitude reclin'd,
The cheerless Tanais pours his hoary urn.
What solemn twilight ! what stupendous shades
Enwrap these infant floods ! thro' every nerve 365
A sacred horror thrills, a pleasing fear
Glides o'er my frame. The forest deepens round ;
And more gigantic still th' impending trees
Stretch their extravagant arms athwart the gloom.
Are these the confines of some fairy world ? 371
A land of Genii ? Say, beyond these wilds
What unknown nations ? If indeed beyond
Aught habitable lies. And whither leads,
To what strange regions, or of bliss or pain, 375
That subterraneous way ! Propitious maids,
Conduct me, while with fearful steps I tread
This trembling ground. The task remains to sing
Your gifts (so Pæon, so the powers of health

Command) to praise your crystal element : 380

The chief ingredient in Heaven's various works ;

Whose flexile genius sparkles in the gem,

Grows firm in oak, and fugitive in wine ;

The vehicle, the source, of nutriment

And life, to all that vegetate or live. 385

O comfortable streams ! with eager lips

And trembling hand the languid thirsty quaff

New life in you ; fresh vigour fills their veins.

No warmer cups the rural ages knew ;

None warmer sought the fires of human kind. 390

Happy in temperate peace ! their equal days

Felt not th' alternate fits of feverish mirth,

And sick dejection. Still serene and pleas'd

They knew no pains but what the tender soul

With pleasure yields to, and would ne'er forget.

Blest with divine immunity from ails, 396

Long centuries they liv'd ; their only fate

Was ripe old age, and rather sleep than death.

Oh ! could those worthies from the world of gods
 Return to visit their degenerate sons, 400
 How would they scorn the joys of modern time,
 With all our art and toil improv'd to pain !
 Too happy they ! but wealth brought luxury,
 And luxury on sloth begot disease.

Learn temperance, friends ; and hear without disdain
 The choice of water. Thus the * Coan sage 406
 Opin'd, and thus the learn'd of every school.
 What least of foreign principles partakes
 Is best : the lightest then ; what bears the touch
 Of fire the least, and soonest mounts in air ; 410
 The most insipid ; the most void of smell.
 Such the rude mountain from his horrid sides
 Pours down ; such waters in the sandy vale
 For ever boil, alike of winter frosts 414
 And summer's heat secure. The crystal stream,
 Through rocks resounding, or for many a mile
 O'er the chaf'd pebbles hurl'd, yields wholesome, pure

* Hippocrates.

And mellow draughts ; except when Winter thaws,
And half the mountains melt into the tide.

Tho' thirst were e'er so resolute, avoid 420
The sordid lake, and all such drowsy floods
As fill from Lethe Belgia's flow canals ;
(With rest corrupt, with vegetation green ;
Squalid with generation, and the birth.
Of little monsters;) till the power of fire 425
Has from profane embraces disengag'd
The violated lymph. The virgin stream
In boiling wastes its finer soul in air.

Nothing like simple element dilutes
The food, or gives the chyle so soon to flow. 430
But where the stomach indolent and cold
Toys with its duty, animate with wine
Th' insipid stream : tho' golden Ceres yields
A more voluptuous, a more sprightly draught ;
Perhaps more active. Wine unmix'd, and all
The gluey floods that from the vex'd abyss. 436

Of fermentation spring ; with spirit fraught,
And furious with intoxicating fire ;
Retard concoction, and preserve unthaw'd
Th' embodied mass. You see what countless years,
Embalm'd in fiery quintessence of wine, 441
The puny wonders of the reptile world,
The tender rudiments of life, the slim
Unravellings of minute anatomy,
Maintain their texture, and unchang'd remain. 445

We curse not wine : the vile excess we blame ;
More fruitful than th' accumulated board,
Of pain and misery. For the subtle draught
Faster and surer swells the vital tide ;
And with more active poison, than the floods 450
Of grosser crudity convey, pervades
The far remote meanders of our frame.
Ah ! fly deceiver ! branded o'er and o'er,
Yet still believ'd ! exulting o'er the wreck
Of sober vows !—But the Parnassian Maids 455

*Another time perhaps shall sing the joys,
The fatal charms, the many woes of wine ;
Perhaps its various tribes, and various powers.

Meantime, I would not always dread the bowl,
Nor every trespass shun. The feverish strife, 460
Rous'd by the rare debauch, subdues, expels
The loitering crudities that burden life ;
And, like a torrent full and rapid, clears
Th' obstructed tubes. Besides, this restless world
Is full of chances, which by habit's power 465
To learn to bear is easier than to shun.

Ah ! when ambition, meagre love of gold,
Or sacred country calls, with mellowing wine
To moisten well the thirsty suffrages ;
Say how, unseason'd to the midnight frays 470
Of Comus and his rout, wilt thou contend
With Centaurs long to hardy deeds inur'd ?
Then learn to revel ; but by slow degrees :
By slow degrees the liberal arts are won ; 474

* See Book IV.

And Hercules grew strong. But when you smooth
The brows of care, indulge your festive vein
In cups by well-inform'd experience found
The least your bane : and only with your friends.
There are sweet follies ; frailties to be seen
By friends alone, and men of generous minds. 480

Oh ! seldom may the fated hours return
Of drinking deep ! I would not daily taste,
Except when life declines, even sober cups.
Weak withering age no rigid law forbids,
With frugal nectar, smooth and flow with balm,
The sapless habit daily to bedew, 486
And give the hesitating wheels of life
Gliblier to play. But youth has better joys :
And is it wise when youth with pleasure flows,
To squander the reliefs of age and pain ! 490

What dextrous thousands just within the goal
Of wild debauch direct their nightly course !

Perhaps no sickly qualms bedim their days,
No morning admonitions shock the head.
But ah ! what woes remain ! life rolls apace, 495
And that incurable disease old age,
In youthful bodies more severely felt,
More sternly active, shakes their blasted prime ;
Except kind nature by some hasty blow 499
Prevent the lingering fates. For know, whate'er
Beyond its natural fervor hurries on
The sanguine tide ; whether the frequent bowl,
High-season'd fare, or exercise to toil
Protracted; spurs to its last stage tir'd life,
And sows the temples with untimely snow. 505
When life is new, the ductile fibres feel
The heart's increasing force ; and, day by day,
The growth advances : 'till the larger tubes,
Acquiring (from their * elemental veins,

* In the human body, as well as in those of other animals, the larger blood vessels are composed of smaller ones ; which, by the violent motion and pressure of the fluids in the large vessels, lose their cavities by degrees, and degenerate into im-

Condens'd to solid chords) a firmer tone, 510
Sustain, and just sustain, th' impetuous blood.
Here stops the growth. With overbearing pulse
And pressure, still the great destroy the small ;
Still with the ruins of the small grow strong.
Life glows meantime, amid the grinding force 515
Of viscous fluids and elastic tubes ;
Its various functions vigorously are plied
By strong machinery ; and in solid health
The man confirm'd long triumphs o'er disease.
But the full ocean ebbs : there is a point, 520
By nature fix'd, whence life must downward tend.
For still the beating tide consolidates
The stubborn vessels, more reluctant still
To the weak throbs of th' ill-supported heart.

pervious chords or fibres. In proportion as these small vessels become solid, the larger must of course grow less extensible, more rigid, and make a stronger resistance to the action of the heart, and force of the blood. From this gradual condensation of the smaller vessels, and consequent rigidity of the larger ones, the progres[s] of the human body from infancy to old age is accounted for.

This languishing, these strength'ning by degrees
To hard unyielding unelastic bone, 526

Thro' tedious channels the congealing flood
Crawls lazily, and hardly wanders on ;
It loiters still ; and now it stirs no more.

This is the period few attain ; the death 530
Of nature ; thus (so Heaven ordain'd it) life
Destroys itself ; and could these laws have chang'd,
Nestor might now the fates of Troy relate ;
And Homer live immortal as his song. X 3. P.

What does not fade ? the tower that long had stood
The crush of thunder and the warring winds, 536
Shook by the slow but sure destroyer, Time,
Now hangs in doubtful ruins o'er its base.
And flinty pyramids, and walls of brass,
Descend : the Babylonian spires are funk ; 540
Achaia, Rome, and Egypt moulder down.
Time shakes the stable tyranny of thrones,
And tottering empires crush by their own weight.

This huge rotundity we tread grows old ;
And all those worlds that roll around the sun, 545
The sun himself, shall die ; and ancient Night
Again involve the desolate abyss :

'Till the Great FATHER thro' the lifeless gloom
Extend his arm to light another world,
And bid new planets roll by other laws. 550
For thro' the regions of unbounded space,
Where unconfin'd Omnipotence has room,
Being, in various systems, fluctuates still
Between creation and abhor'd decay :

It ever did ; perhaps and ever will. 555
New worlds are still emerging from the deep ;
The old descending, in their turns to rise.

END OF THE SECOND BOOK.

+ The cold east winds &c

THE
THIRD BOOK
OF THE
ART OF PRESERVING HEALTH.

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THE
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OF
PRESERVING HEALTH.

B O O K III.

E X E R C I S E.

THRO' various toils th' adventurous Muse has past ;
But half the toil, and more than half, remains.
Rude is her theme, and hardly fit for song ;
Plain, and of little ornament ; and I
But little practis'd in th' Aonian arts. 5
Yet not in vain such labours have we tried,
If aught these lays the fickle health confirm.
To you, ye delicate, I write ; for you

I tame my youth to philosophic cares,
And grow still paler by the midnight lamps. 10
Not to debilitate with timorous rules
A hardy frame ; nor needlessly to brave
Inglorious dangers, proud of mortal strength,
Is all the lesson that in wholesome years 14
Concerns the strong. His care were ill bestow'd
Who would with warm effeminacy nurse
The thriving oak which on the mountain's brow
Bears all the blasts that sweep the wint'ry heaven.

Behold the labourer of the glebe, who toils
In dust, in rain, in cold and sultry skies ; 20
Save but the grain from mildews and the flood,
Nought anxious he what sickly stars ascend.
He knows no laws by Esculapius given ;
He studies none. Yet him nor midnight fogs
Infest, nor those envenom'd shafts that fly 25
When rabid Sirius fires th' autumnal noon.
His habit pure with plain and temperate meals,

Robust with labour, and by custom steel'd
 To every casualty of varied life ;
 Serene he bears the peevish Eastern blast, 30
 And uninfect'd breathes the mortal South.

Such the reward of rude and sober life ;
 Of labour such. By health the peasant's toil *if he had it*
 Is well repaid ; if exercise were pain
 Indeed, and temperance pain. By arts like these
 Laconia nurs'd of old her hardy sons ; 36
 And Rome's unconquer'd legions urg'd their way,
 Unhurt, thro' every toil in every clime.

Toil, and be strong. By toil the flaccid nerves
 Grow firm, and gain a more compacted tone ; 40
 The greener juices are by toil subdu'd,
 Mellow'd, and subtiliz'd ; the vapid old
 Expell'd, and all the rancour of the blood.
 Come, my companions, ye who feel the charms
 Of nature and the year ; come, let us stray 45

Where chance or fancy leads our roving walk :
Come, while the soft voluptuous breezes fan
The fleecy heavens, enwrap the limbs in balm,
And shed a charming languor o'er the soul.

Nor when bright Winter sows with prickly frost
The vigorous ether, in unmanly warmth 51

Indulge at home ; nor even when Eurus' blasts
This way and that convolve the lab'ring woods.

My liberal walks, save when the skies in rain
Or fogs relent, no season should confine 55
Or to the cloister'd gallery or arcade.

X Go, climb the mountain ; from th' ethereal source
Imbibe the recent gale. The cheerful morn
Beams o'er the hills ; go, mount th' exulting steed.
Already, see, the deep-mouth'd beagles catch 60
The tainted mazes ; and, on eager sport
Intent, with emulous impatience try
Each doubtful trace. Or, if a nobler prey
Delight you more, go chase the desperate deer ;
And thro' its deepest solitudes awake 65
The vocal forest with the jovial horn.

But if the breathless chase o'er hill and dale
Exceed your strength, a sport of less fatigue,
Not less delightful, the prolific stream
Affords. The crystal rivulet, that o'er 70
A stony channel rolls its rapid maze,
Swarms with the silver fry. Such, thro' the bounds
Of pastoral Stafford, runs the brawling Trent ;
Such Eden, sprung from Cumbrian mountains; such
The Esk, o'erhung with woods ; and such the stream
On whose Arcadian banks I first drew air, 76
Liddel ; till now, except in Doric lays
Tun'd to her murmurs by her love-sick swains,
Unknown in song : tho' not a purer stream,
Thro' meads more flowery or more romantic groves,
Rolls toward the western main. Hail, sacred flood !
May still thy hospitable swains be blest
In rural innocence ; thy mountains still
Teem with the fleecy race ; thy tuneful woods
For ever flourish ; and thy vales look gay 85
With painted meadows, and the golden grain !

Oft, with thy blooming sons, when life was new,
 Sportive and petulant, and charm'd with toys,
 In thy transparent eddies have I lav'd:
 Oft trac'd with patient steps thy fairy banks, 90
 With the well-imitated fly to hook
 The eager trout, and with the slender line
 And yielding rod solicit to the shore
 The struggling panting prey; while vernal clouds
 And tepid gales obscur'd the ruffled pool, 95
 And from the deeps call'd forth the wanton swarms.

Form'd on the Samian school, or those of Ind,
There are who think these pastimes scarce humane.
 Yet in my mind (and not relentless I)
 His life is pure that wears no fouler stains. 100
 But if thro' genuine tenderness of heart,
sore heart Or secret want of relish for the game,
 You shun the glories of the chase, nor care
 To haunt the peopled stream; the garden yields
 A soft amusement, an humane delight. 105

+ La di nece siba vifia.

To raise th' insipid nature of the ground ;
Or tame its savage genius to the grace
Of careless sweet rusticity, that seems
The amiable result of happy chance,
Is to create ; and gives a god-like joy, 110
Which every year improves. Nor thou disdain
To check the lawless riot of the trees,
To plant the grove, or turn the barren mould.
O happy he ! whom, when his years decline,
(His fortune and his fame by worthy means 115
Attain'd, and equal to his moderate mind ;
His life approv'd by all the wise and good, X
Even envied by the vain) the peaceful groves
Of Epicurus, from this stormy world,
Receive to rest ; of all ungrateful cares 120
Absolv'd, and sacred from the selfish crowd.
Happiest of men ! if the same soil invites
A chosen few, companions of his youth,
Once fellow-rakes perhaps, now rural friends ;
With whom in easy commerce to pursue 125

Nature's free charms, and vie for sylvan fame :

A fair ambition ; void of strife or guile,

Or jealousy, or pain to be outdone.

Who plans th' enchanted garden, who directs

The vista best, and best conducts the stream : 130

Whose groves the fastest thicken and ascend ;

Whom first the welcome Spring salutes ; who shews

The earliest bloom, the sweetest proudest charms

Of Flora, who gives Pomona's juice

To match the sprightly genius of champain. 135

Thrice happy days ! in rural busines past :

Blest winter nights ! when as the genial fire

Cheers the wide hall, his cordial family

With soft domestic arts the hours beguile,

And pleasing talk that starts no timorous fame,

With witless wantonness to hunt it down : 141

Or thro' the fairy-land of tale or song

Delighted wander, in fictitious fates

Engag'd, and all that strikes humanity :

Till lost in fable, they the stealing hour 145

Of timely rest forget. Sometimes, at eve
His neighbours lift the latch, and bless unbid
His festal roof ; while, o'er the light repast,
And sprightly cups, they mix in social joy ;
And, thro' the maze of conversation, trace 150
Whate'er amuses or improves the mind.
Sometimes at eve (for I delight to taste
The native zest and flavour of the fruit,
Where sense grows wild and takes of no manure)
The decent, honest, cheerful husbandman 155
Should drown his labour, in my friendly bowl ;
And at my table find himself at home.

Whate'er you study, in whate'er you sweat,
Indulge your taste. Some love the manly foils ;
The tennis some ; and some the graceful dance.
Others more hardy, range the purple heath, 161
Or naked stubble ; where, from field to field,
The sounding coveys urge their labouring flight ;
Eager amid the rising cloud to pour

The gun's unerring thunder : and there are 165
Whom still the † meed of the green archer charms.
He chooses best, whose labour entertains
His vacant fancy most : the toil you hate
Fatigues you soon, and scarce improves your limbs.

As beauty still has blemish, and the mind 170
The most accomplish'd its imperfect fide,
Few bodies are there of that happy mould
But some one part is weaker than the rest :
The legs, perhaps, or arms refuse their load,
Or the chest labours. These assiduously, 175
But gently, in their proper arts employ'd,
Acquire a vigour and springy activity
To which they were not born. But weaker parts
Abhor fatigue and violent discipline.

Begin with gentle toils ; and as your nerves 180
Grow firm, to harder by just steps aspire.

† This word is much used by some of the old English poets,
and signifies *Reward* or *Prize*.

The prudent, even in every moderate walk,
At first but saunter ; and by slow degrees
Increase their pace. This doctrine of the wise
Well knows the master of the flying steed. 185
First from the goal the manag'd couriers play
On bended reins : as yet the skilful youth
Repress their foamy pride ; but every breath
The race grows warmer, and the tempest swells ;
Till all the fiery mettle has its-way, 190
And the thick thunder hurries o'er the plain.
When all at once from indolence to toil
You spring, the fibres by the hasty shock
Are tir'd and crack'd, before their unctuous coats,
Compress'd, can pour the lubricating balm. 195
Besides, collected in the passive veins,
The purple mass a sudden torrent rolls,
O'erpowers the heart and deluges the lungs
With dangerous inundation : oft the source
Of fatal woes ; a cough that foams with blood, 200

Asthma and feller * Peripneumony,
Or the slow minings of the hectic fire.

Th' athletic fool, to whom what Heaven deny'd
Of soul is well compensated in limbs,
Oft from his rage, or brainless frolic, feels 205
His vegetation and brute force decay.
The men of better clay and finer mould
Know nature, feel the human dignity ;
And scorn to vie with oxen or with apes.
Purſu'd prolixly, even the gentleſt toil 210
Is waste of health : repofe by ſmall fatigue
Is earn'd ; and (where your habit is not prone
To thaw) by the firſt moisture of the brows.
The fine and ſubtle ſpirits coſt too much
To be profuſ'd, too muſh the roſcid balm. 215
But when the hard varieties of life
You toil to learn, or try the duftry chafe,
Or the warm deeds of ſome important day :

* The inflammation of the lungs.

Hot from the field, indulge not yet your limbs
In wish'd repose ; nor court the fanning gale, 220
Nor taste the spring. O ! by the sacred tears
Of widows, orphans, mothers, sisters, fires,
Forbear ! no other pestilence has driven
Such myriads o'er th' irremeable deep.
Why this so fatal, the sagacious Muse 225
Thro' nature's cunning labyrinths could trace :
But there are secrets which who knows not now,
Must, ere he reach them, climb the heapy Alps
Of science ; and devote seven years to toil.
Besides, I would not stun your patient ears 230
With what it little boots you to attain.
He knows enough, the mariner, who knows
Where lurk the shelves, and where the whirlpools boil,
What signs portend the storm : to subtler minds
He leaves to scan, from what mysterious cause 235
Charybdis rages in th' Ionian wave ;
Whence those impetuous currents in the main
Which neither oar nor sail can stem ; and why

The roughening deep expects the storm, as sure

As red Orion mounts the shrouded heaven.

240

In ancient times, when Rome with Athens vied

For polish'd luxury and useful arts ;

All hot and reeking from th' Olympic strife,

And warm Palestra, in the tepid bath

Th' athletic youth relax'd their weary limbs.

245

Soft oils bedew'd them, with the grateful pow'r's

Of Nard and Cassia fraught, to sooth and heal

The cherish'd nerves. Our less voluptuous clime

Not much invites us to such arts as these.

'Tis not for those, whom gelid skies embrace,

250

And chilling fogs ; whose perspiration feels

Such frequent bars from Eurus and the North ;

'Tis not for those to cultivate a skin

Too soft ; or teach the recremental fume

Too fast to crowd thro' such precarious ways.

255

For thro' the small arterial mouths that pierce

In endless millions the close-woven skin,

The baser fluids in a constant stream
Escape, and viewless melt into the winds.
While this eternal, this most copious, waste 260
Of blood, degenerate into vapid brine,
Maintains its wonted meaure, all the powers
Of health befriend you, all the wheels of life
With ease and pleasure move: but this restrain'd
Or more or less, so more or less you feel 265
The functions labour: from this fatal source
What woes descend is never to be sung.
To take their numbers were to count the sands
That ride in whirlwind the parch'd Libyan air;
Or waves that, when the blustering North embroils
The Baltic, thunder on the German shore. 271
Subject not then, by soft emollient arts,
This grand expence, on which your fates depend,
To every caprice of the sky; nor thwart
The genius of your clime: for from the blood 275
Least fickle rise the recremental steams,
And least obnoxious to the styptic air,

Which breathe thro' straiter and more callous pores.
The temper'd Scythian hence, half-naked treads
His boundless snows, nor rues th' inclement heaven ;
And hence our painted ancestors defied 281
The East : nor curs'd, like us, their fickle sky.

The body, moulded by the clime, endures
Th' Equator heats or Hyperborean frost :
Except by habits foreign to its turn, 285
Unwise you counteract its forming pow'r.
Rude at the first, the Winter shocks you less
By long acquaintance : study then your sky,
Form to its manners your obsequious frame,
And learn to suffer what you cannot shun. 290
Against the rigors of a damp cold heav'n
To fortify their bodies, some frequent
The gelid cistern ; and, where nought forbids,
I praise their dauntless heart : a frame so steel'd
Dreads not the cough, nor those ungenial blasts 295
That breathe the tertian or fell rheumatism ;

The nerves so temper'd never quit their tone,
No chronic languors haunt such hardy breasts.
But all things have their bounds : and he who makes
By daily use the kindest regimen 300
Essential to his health, should never mix
With human kind, nor art nor trade pursue.
He not the safe vicissitudes of life
Without some shock endures ; ill-fitted he
To want the known, or bear unusual things. 305
Besides, the powerful remedies of pain
(Since pain in spite of all our care will come)
Should never with your prosperous days of health
Grow too familiar : for by frequent use
The strongest medicines lose their healing power,
And even the surest poisons theirs to kill. 311

Let those who from the frozen Arctos reach
Parch'd Mauritania, or the sultry West,
Or the wide flood that laves rich Indostan,
Plunge thrice a day, and in the tepid wave 315

Untwist their stubborn pores ; that full and free

Th' evaporation thro' the soften'd skin

May bear proportion to the swelling blood.

So may they 'scape the fever's rapid flames ;

So feel untainted the hot breath of hell.

320

With us, the man of no complaint demands

The warm ablution just enough to clear

The fluices of the skin, enough to keep

The body sacred from indecent soil.

Still to be pure, ev'n did it not conduce

325

(As much it does) to health, were greatly worth

Your daily pains. 'Tis this adorns the rich ;

The want of this is poverty's worst woe ;

With this external virtue age maintains

A decent grace ; without it youth and charms 330

Are loathsome. This the venal Graces know ;

So doubtless do your wives : for married fires,

As well as lovers, still pretend to taste ;

Nor is it less (all prudent wives can tell)

To lose a husband's than a lover's heart.

335

But now the hours and seasons when to toil
From foreign themes recall my wandering song.
Some labour fasting, or but slightly fed
To lull the grinding stomach's hungry rage.
Where nature feeds too corpulent a frame 340
'Tis wisely done : for while the thirsty veins,
Impatient of lean penury, devour
The treasur'd oil, then is the happiest time
To shake the lazy balsam from its cells.
Now while the stomach from the full repast 345
Subsides, but ere returning hunger gnaws,
Ye leaner habits, give an hour to toil :
And ye whom no luxuriancy of growth
Oppresses yet, or threatens to oppress.
But from the recent meal no labours please, 350
Of limbs or mind. For now the cordial powers
Claim all the wandering spirits to a work
Of strong and subtle toil, and great event :
A work of time : and you may rue the day
You hurried, with untimely exercise, 355

A half-concocted chyle into the blood.
The body overcharged with unctuous phlegm
Much toil demands : the lean elastic less.
While Winter chills the blood and binds the veins,
No labours are too hard : by those you 'scape 360
The slow diseases of the torpid year ;
Endless to name ; to one of which alone,
To that which tears the nerves, the toil of slaves
Is pleasure : oh ! from such inhuman pains
May all be free who merit not the wheel ! 365
But from the burning lion when the sun
Pours down his fultry wrath ; now while the blood
Too much already maddens in the veins,
And all the finer fluids thro' the skin
Explore their flight ; me, near the cool cascade 370
Reclin'd, or faunt'ring in the lofty grove,
No needless flight occasion should engage
To pant and sweat beneath the fiery noon.
Now the fresh morn alone and mellow eve
To shady walks and active rural sports 375

Invite. But, while the chilling dews descend,
May nothing tempt you to the cold embrace
Of humid skies ; tho' 'tis no vulgar joy
To trace the horrors of the solemn wood
While the soft evening faddens into night : 380
Tho' the sweet Poet of the vernal groves
Melts all the night in strains of am'rous woe.

The shades descend, and midnight o'er the world
Expands her fable wings. Great nature droops
Thro' all her works. Now happy he whose toil
Has o'er his languid powerless limbs diffus'd 386
A pleasing lassitude : he not in vain
Invokes the gentle deity of dreams.
His powers the most voluptuously dissolve
In soft repose : on him the balmy dews 390
Of sleep with double nutriment descend.
But would you sweetly waste the blank of night
In deep oblivion ; or on Fancy's wings
Visit the paradise of happy dreams,

And waken cheerful as the lively morn ; 395
Oppress not nature sinking down to rest
With feasts too late, too solid, or too full :
But be the first concoction half-matur'd
Ere you to mighty indolence resign
Your passive faculties. He from the toils 400
And troubles of the day to heavier toil
Retires, whom trembling from the tower that rocks
Amid the clouds, or Calpe's hideous height,
The busy dæmons hurl ; or in the main
O'erwhelm ; or bury struggling under ground. 405
Not all a monarch's luxury the woes
Can counterpoise of that most wretched man,
Whose nights are shaken with the frantic fits
Of wild Orestes ; whose delirious brain, 409
Stung by the furies, works with poison'd thought :
While pale and monstrous painting shocks the soul ;
And mangled consciousness bemoans itself
For ever torn ; and chaos floating round.
What dreams preface, what dangers these or those

Portend to sanity, tho' prudent feers 415
Reveal'd of old and men of deathless fame,
We would not to the superstitious mind
Suggest new throbs, new vanities of fear.
'Tis ours to teach you from the peaceful night
To banish omens and all restless woes. 420

In study some protract the silent hours, 425
Which others consecrate to mirth and wine ;
And sleep till noon, and hardly live till night.
But surely this redeems not from the shades
One hour of life. Nor does it nought avail
What season you to drowsy Morpheus give
Of th' ever-varying circle of the day ;
Or whether, thro' the tedious winter gloom,
You tempt the midnight or the morning damps.
The body, fresh and vigorous from repose, 430
Defies the early fogs : but, by the toils
Of wakeful day, exhausted and unstrung,
Weakly resists the night's unwholesome breath.

- The grand discharge, th' effusion of the skin,
Slowly impair'd, the languid maladies 435
Creep on, and thro' the sick'ning functions steal.
As, when the chilling East invades the Spring,
The delicate Narcissus pines away
In hectic languor ; and a slow disease
Taints all the family of flowers, condemn'd 440
To cruel heav'ns. But why, already prone
To fade, should beauty cherish its own bane ?
O shame ! O pity ! nipt with pale quadrille,
And midnight cares, the bloom of Albion dies !
- By toil subdu'd, the warrior and the hind 445
Sleep fast and deep : their active functions soon
With generous streams the subtle tubes supply ;
And soon the tonic irritable nerves
Feel the fresh impulse and awake the soul.
The sons of indolence with long repose, 450
Grow torpid ; and with slowest Lethe drunk,
Feebly and lingringly return to life,

Blunt every sense and pow'rless every limb.

Ye, prone to sleep (whom sleeping most annoys)

On the hard matrass or elastic couch 455

Extend your limbs, and wean yourselves from floth ;

Nor grudge the lean projector, of dry brain

And springy nerves, the blandishments of down :

Nor envy while the buried Bacchanal

Exhales his surfeit in prolixer dreams. 460

He without riot, in the balmy feast

Of life, the wants of nature has supply'd,

Who rises, cool, serene, and full of soul.

But pliant nature more or less demands,

As custom forms her ; and all sudden change 465

She hates of habit, even from bad to good.

If faults in life, or new emergencies,

From habits urge you by long time confirm'd,

Slow may the change arrive, and stage by stage ;

Slow as the shadow o'er the dial moves, 470

Slow as the stealing progress of the year.

Observe the circling year. How unperceiv'd
Her seasons change ! Behold ! by slow degrees,
Stern Winter tam'd into a ruder Spring ;
The ripen'd Spring a milder Summer glows ; 475
Departing Summer sheds Pomona's store ;
And aged Autumn brews the winter-storm.
Slow as they come, these changes come not void
Of mortal shocks : the cold and torrid reigns,
The two great periods of th' important year, 480
Are in their first approaches seldom safe :
Funereal Autumn all the sickly dread,
And the black Fates deform the lovely Spring. ||
He well advis'd who taught our wiser fires
Early to borrow Muscovy's warm spoils, 485
Ere the first frost has touch'd the tender blade ;
And late resign them, tho' the wanton Spring
Should deck her charms with all her sister's rays.
For while the effluence of the skin maintains
Its native measure, the pleuritic Spring 490
Glides harmless by ; and Autumn, sick to death
With fallow Quartans, no contagion breathes.

I in prophetic numbers could unfold
The omens of the year : what seasons teem
With what diseases ; what the humid South 495
Prepares, and what the demon of the East :
But you perhaps refuse the tedious song.
Besides, whatever plagues in heat, or cold,
Or drought, or moisture dwell, they hurt not you,
Skill'd to correct the vices of the sky, 500
And taught already how to each extreme
To bend your life. But should the public bane
Infect you ; or some trespass of your own,
Or flaw of nature, hint mortality :
Soon as a not unpleasing horror glides 505
Along the spine, thro' all your torpid limbs ;
When first the head throbs, or the stomach feels
A sickly load, a weary pain the loins ;
Be Celsus call'd : the Fates come rushing on ;
The rapid Fates admit of no delay. 510
While wilful you, and fatally secure,
Expect tomorrow's more auspicious fun,

The growing pest, whose infancy was weak
And easy vanquish'd, with triumphant sway
O'erpow'rs your life. For want of timely care, 515
Millions have died of medicable wounds.

—Ah ! in what perils is vain life engag'd !
What flight neglects, what trivial faults destroy
The hardiest frame ! of indolence, of toil,
We die ; of want, of superfluity : 520
The all-surrounding heaven, the vital air,
Is big with death. And, tho' the putrid South
Be shut ; tho' no convulsive agony
Shake, from the deep foundations of the world,
Th' imprison'd plagues ; a secret venom oft 525
Corrupts the air, the water, and the land.
What livid deaths has sad Byzantium seen !
How oft has Cairo, with a mother's woe,
Wept o'er her slaughter'd sons and lonely streets !
Even Albion, girt with less malignant skies, 530
Albion the poison of the gods has drank,
And felt the sting of monsters all her own.

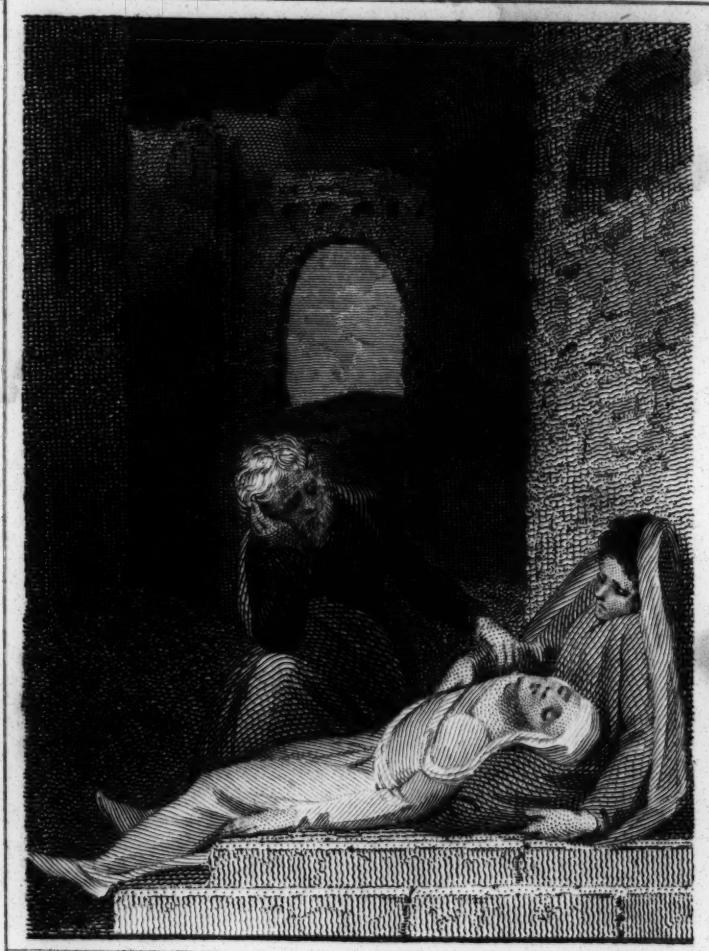
Ere yet the fell Plantagenets had spent
Their ancient rage, at Bosworth's purple field ;
While, for which tyrant England should receive,
Her legions in incestuous murders mix'd, 536
And daily horrors ; till the Fates were drunk
With kindred blood by kindred hands profus'd :
Another plague of more gigantic arm
Arose, a monster never known before, 540
Rear'd from Cocytus its portentous head.
This rapid Fury not, like other pests,
Pursu'd a gradual course, but in a day
Rush'd as a storm o'er half th' astonish'd isle,
And strew'd with sudden carcases the land. 545

First thro' the shoulders, or whatever part
Was seiz'd the first, a fervid vapour sprung.
With rash combustion thence, the quivering spark
Shot to the heart, and kindled all within ;
And soon the surface caught the spreading fires. 550
Thro' all the yielding pores, the melted blood

Gush'd out in smoaky sweats ; but nought assuag'd
The torrid heat within, nor aught reliev'd
The stomach's anguish. With incessant toil,
Desperate of ease, impatient of their pain, 555
They toss'd from side to side. In vain the stream
Ran full and clear, they burnt and thirsted still.
The restless arteries with rapid blood
Beat strong and frequent. Thick and pantingly
The breath was fetch'd, and with huge lab'ring heav'd.
At last a heavy pain oppress'd the head, 561
A wild delirium came ; their weeping friends
Were strangers now, and this no home of theirs.
Harras'd with toil on toil, the sinking powers
Lay prostrate and o'erthrown ; a ponderous sleep
Wrapt all the senses up : they slept and died.

In some a gentle horror crept at first
O'er all the limbs ; the fluices of the skin
Withheld their moisture, till by art provok'd
The sweats o'erflow'd ; but in a clammy tide : 570





T. Stothard R.A. pinx:

J. Heath sculp:

*'Twas all the Business then
To tend the sick, and, in their turns to die.
In Heaps they fell:*

Now free and copious, now restrain'd and slow ;
Of tinctures various, as the temperature
Had mix'd the blood ; and rank with fetid steams :
As if the pent-up humours by delay
Were grown more fell, more putrid, and malign.
Here lay their hopes (tho' little hope remain'd) 576
With full effusion of perpetual sweats
To drive the venom out. And here the Fates
Were kind, that long they linger'd not in pain.
For who surviv'd the sun's diurnal race 580
Rose from the dreary gates of hell redeem'd :
Some the sixth hour oppress'd, and some the third.

Of many thousands few untainted 'scap'd ;
Of those infected fewer 'lcap'd alive ;
Of those who liv'd some felt a second blow ; 585
And whom the second spar'd a third destroy'd.
Frantic with fear, they sought by flight to shun
The fierce contagion. O'er the mournful land
Th' infected city pour'd her hurrying swarms :

Rous'd by the flames that fir'd her seats around, 590

Th' infected country rush'd into the town.

Some, sad at home, and in the desert some,

Abjur'd the fatal commerce of mankind ;

In vain : where'er they fled, the Fates pursu'd. —

Others, with hopes more specious, cross'd the main,

To seek protection in far distant skies ; 596

But none they found. It seem'd the general air,

From pole to pole, from Atlas to the East,

Was then at enmity with English blood.

For, but the race of England, all were safe

In foreign climes ; nor did this Fury taste 600

The foreign blood which England then contain'd.

Where should they fly ? The circumambient heaven

Involv'd them still ; and every breeze was bane.

Where find relief ? The salutary art

Was mute ; and, startled at the new disease, 605

In fearful whispers hopeless omens gave.

To Heaven with suppliant rites they sent their pray'rs ;

Heav'n heard them not. Of every hope depriv'd ;

Fatigued with vain resources ; and subdued
With woes resistless and enfeebling fear ; 610
Passive they funk beneath the weighty blow.
Nothing but lamentable sounds was heard,
Nor aught was seen but ghastly views of death.
Infectious horror ran from face to face,
And pale despair. 'Twas all the busines then 615
To tend the sick, and in their turns to die.
In heaps they fell : and oft one bed, they say,
The sick'ning, dying, and the dead contain'd.

Ye guardian Gods, on whom the Fates depend
Of tottering Albion ! ye eternal fires 620
That lead thro' heav'n the wandering year ! ye powers
That o'er th' encircling elements preside !
May nothing worse than what this age has seen
Arrive ! Enough abroad, enough at home
Has Albion bled. Here a distemper'd heaven 625
Has thinn'd her cities ; from those lofty cliffs
That awe proud Gaul, to Thule's wintry reign ;

While in the West, beyond th' Atlantic foam,
Her bravest sons, keen for the fight, have dy'd
The death of cowards and of common men : 630
Sunk void of wounds, and fall'n without renown.

But from these views the weeping Muses turn,
And other themes invite my wandering song.

END OF THE THIRD BOOK.

THE
FOURTH BOOK
OF THE
ART OF PRESERVING HEALTH.

THE PASSIONS.

come l'ho fatto, controlla
ogni cosa

Che cosa c'ha fatto il bacio
Stasera —

THE
A R T
OF
PRESERVING HEALTH.

B O O K IV.

T H E P A S S I O N S.

THE choice of Aliment, the choice of Air,
The use of Toil and all external things,
Already sung ; it now remains to trace
What good, what evil from ourselves proceeds :
And how the subtle Principle within 5
Inspires with health, or mines with strange decay
The passive body. Ye poetic shades,
Who know the secrets of the world unseen,

Affist my song ! for, in a doubtful theme
Engag'd, I wander thro' mysterious ways.

10

There is, they say, (and I believe there is)

A spark within us of th' immortal fire,

That animates and moulds the grosser frame ;

And when the body sinks escapes to heaven,

Its native seat, and mixes with the Gods.

15

Meanwhile this heavenly particle pervades

The mortal elements ; in every nerve

It thrills with pleasure, or grows mad with pain.

And, in its secret conclave, as it feels

The body's woes and joys, this ruling power

20

Wields at its will the dull material world,

And is the body's health or malady.

By its own toil the gross corporeal frame
Fatigues, extenuates, or destroys itself.

Nor less the labours of the mind corrode

25

The solid fabric : for by subtle parts

And viewless atoms, secret Nature moves
The mighty wheels of this stupendous world.
By subtle fluids pour'd thro' subtle tubes
The natural, vital functions are perform'd. 30
By these the stubborn aliments are tam'd ;
The toiling heart distributes life and strength ;
These the still-crumbing frame rebuild ; and these
Are lost in thinking, and dissolve in air.

But 'tis not thought (for still the soul's employ'd)
'Tis painful thinking that corrodes our clay. 36
All day the vacant eye without fatigue
Strays o'er the heaven and earth ; but long intent
On microscopic arts its vigour fails.
Just so the mind, with various thought amus'd, 40
Nor aches itself, nor gives the body pain.
But anxious Study, Discontent, and Care,
Love without hope, and Hate without revenge,
And Fear, and Jealousy, fatigue the soul,
Engross the subtle ministers of life, 45

And spoil the lab'ring functions of their share.

Hence the lean gloom that Melancholy wears ;

The Lover's paleness ; and the fallow hue

Of Envy, Jealousy ; the meagre stare

Of sore Revenge : the canker'd body hence 50

Betrays each fretful motion of the mind.

The strong-built pedant ; who both night and day

Feeds on the coarsest fare the schools bestow,

And crudely fattens at gross Burman's stall ;

O'erwhelm'd with phlegm lies in a dropfy drown'd,

Or sinks in lethargy before his time. 56

With useful studies you, and arts that please,

Employ your mind, amuse but not fatigue.

Peace to each drowsy metaphysic sage !

And ever may all heavy systems rest !

60

Yet some there are, even of elastic parts,

Whom strong and obstinate ambition leads

Thro' all the rugged roads of barren lore,

And gives to relish what their generous taste

Would else refuse. But may nor thirst of fame,
Nor love of knowledge, urge you to fatigue 66
With constant drudgery the liberal soul.
Toy with your books : and, as the various fits
Of humour seize you, from philosophy
To fable shift ; from serious Antonine 70
To Rabelais' ravings, and from prose to song.

While reading pleases, but no longer, read ;
And read aloud resounding Homer's strain, *ah !*
And wield the thunder of Demosthenes.
The chest so exercis'd improves its strength ; 75
And quick vibrations thro' the bowels drive
The restless blood, which in unactive days
Would loiter else thro' unelastic tubes.
Deem it not trifling while I recommend
What posture suits : to stand and sit by turns, 80
As nature prompts, is best. But o'er your leaves
To lean for ever, cramps the vital parts,
And robs the fine machinery of its play.

'Tis the great art of life to manage well
The restless mind. For ever on pursuit 85
Of knowledge bent, it starves the grosser powers :
Quite unemploy'd, against its own repose
It turns its fatal edge, and sharper pangs
Than what the body knows embitter life.
Chiefly where Solitude, sad nurse of Care, 90
To sickly musing gives the pensive mind,
There Madness enters ; and the dim-ey'd fiend,
Sour Melancholy, night and day provokes
— Her own eternal wound. The sun grows pale ;
A mournful visionary light o'erspreads 95
The cheerful face of nature : earth becomes
A dreary desert, and heaven frowns above.
Then various shapes of curs'd illusion rise :
Whate'er the wretched fears, creating fear ;
Forms out of nothing ; and with monsters teems
Unknown in hell. The prostrate soul beneath 101
A load of huge imagination heaves ;
And all the horrors that the murderer feels
With anxious flutterings wake the guiltless breast.

Such phantoms Pride in solitary scenes, 105
Or Fear, on delicate Self-love creates.
From other cares absolv'd, the busy mind
Finds in yourself a theme to pore upon ;
It finds you miserable, or makes you so.
For while yourself you anxiously explore, 110
Timorous Self-love, with sick'ning Fancy's aid,
Presents the danger that you dread the most,
And ever galls you in your tender part.
Hence some for love, and some for jealousy,
For grim religion some, and some for pride, 115
Have lost their reason : some for fear of want
Want all their lives ; and others every day
For fear of dying suffer worse than death.
Ah ! from your bosoms banish, if you can,
Those fatal guests : and first, the daemon Fear,
That trembles at impossible events ; 121
Lest aged Atlas should resign his load,
And heaven's eternal battlements rush down.
Is there an evil worse than Fear itself ? X

And what avails it that indulgent Heaven 125

From mortal eyes has wrapt the woes to come,

If we, ingenious to torment ourselves,

about art
Grow pale at hideous fictions of our own ?

Enjoy the present ; nor with needless cares,

Of what may spring from blind Misfortune's womb,

Appall the surest hour that life bestows.

131

Serene, and master of yourself, prepare

For what may come ; and leave the rest to Heaven.

Oft from the body, by long ails mis-tun'd,

These evils sprung ; the most important health, 135

That of the mind, destroy : and when the mind

They first invade, the conscious body soon

In sympathetic languishment declines.

These chronic passions, while from real woes

They rise, and yet without the body's fault

140

Infest the soul, admit one only cure ;

Diversion, hurry, and a restless life.

Vain are the consolations of the wise ;

+ non riuolfer le stelle, che noi soli
a noi stessi fabbri diam pur delle mire
nostre;

In vain your friends would reason down your pain. *

O ye, whose souls relentless love has tam'd 145

To soft distress, or friends untimely fall'n !

Court not the luxury of tender thought ;

Nor deem it impious to forget those pains

That hurt the living, nought avail the dead.

Go, soft enthusiast! quit the cypress groves, 150

Nor to the rivulet's lonely moanings tune

Your sad complaint. Go, seek the cheerful haunts

Of men, and mingle with the bustling crowd ;

Lay schemes for wealth, or power, or fame, the wish

Of nobler minds, and push them night and day.

Or join the caravan in quest of scenes 156

New to your eyes, and shifting every hour,

Beyond the Alps, beyond the Appenines.

Or more advent'rous, rush into the field

Where war grows hot ; and, raging thro' the sky,

The lofty trumpet swells the madd'ning soul : 161

And in the hardy camp and toilsome march

Forget all softer and less manly cares.

But most too passive, when the blood runs low,
Too weakly indolent to strive with pain, 165
And bravely by resisting conquer fate,
Try Circe's arts ; and in the tempting bowl
Of poison'd nectar sweet oblivion swill.
Struck by the pow'rful charm, the gloom dissolves
In empty air : Elysium opens round, 170
A pleasing phrenzy buoys the lighten'd soul,
And sanguine hopes dispel your fleeting care ;
And what was difficult, and what was dire,
Yields to your prowess and superior stars :
The happiest you of all that e'er were mad, 175
Or are, or shall be, could this folly last.
But soon your heaven is gone ; a heavier gloom
Shuts o'er your head : and as the thund'ring stream,
Swoln o'er its banks with sudden mountain rain,
Sinks from its tumult to a silent brook ; 180
So, when the frantic raptures in your breast
Subside, you languish into mortal man ;
You sleep, and waking find yourself undone.

For prodigal of life, in one rash night
You lavish'd more than might support three days.
A heavy morning comes; your cares return 186
With tenfold rage. An anxious stomach well
May be endur'd; so may the throbbing head:
But such a dim delirium, such a dream,
Involves you; such a dastardly despair 190
Unmans your soul, as madd'ning Pentheus felt,
When, baited round Cithæron's cruel sides
He saw two suns, and double Thebes ascend.
You curse the sluggish Port; you curse the wretch,
The felon, with unnatural mixture first 195
Who dar'd to violate the virgin wine.
Or on the fugitive Champain you pour
A thousand curses; for to heav'n it wrapt
Your soul, to plunge you deeper in despair.
Perhaps you rue even that divinest gift, 200
The gay, serene, good-natur'd Burgundy,
Or the fresh fragrant vintage of the Rhine:
And wish that Heaven from mortals had with-held
The grape, and all intoxicating bowls.

Besides, it wounds you sore to recollect 205
What follies in your loose unguarded hour
Escap'd. For one irrevocable word,
Perhaps that meant no harm, you lose a friend.
Or in the rage of wine your hasty hand
Performs a deed to haunt you to the grave. 210
Add that your means, your health, your parts decay ;
Your friends avoid you ; brutishly transform'd
They hardly know you ; or if one remains
To wish you well, he wishes you in heaven.
Despis'd, unwept you fall ; who might have left
A sacred, cherish'd, sadly-pleasing name; 216
A name still to be utter'd with a sigh.
Your last ungraceful scene has quite effac'd
All sense and memory of your former worth.

How to live happiest ; how avoid the pains,
The disappointments, and disgusts of those 221
Who would in pleasure all their hours employ ;
The precepts here of a divine old man

I could recite. Tho' old, he still retain'd

His manly sense, and energy of mind.

225

Virtuous and wise he was, but not severe;

He still remember'd that he once was young; -

His easy presence check'd no decent joy.

Him even the dissolute admir'd ; for he

A graceful looseness when he pleas'd put on, 230

And laughing could instruct. Much had he read,

Much more had seen ; he studied from the life,

And in th' original perus'd mankind. X

Vers'd in the woes and vanities of life,

He pitied man : and much he pitied those 235

Whom falsely-smiling Fate has curs'd with means

To dissipate their days in quest of joy.

Our aim is happiness ; 'tis yours, 'tis mine,

He said, 'tis the pursuit of all that live ;

Yet few attain it, if 'twas ere attain'd. 240

But they the widest wander from the mark,

Who thro' the flowery paths of faunt'ring joy

Seek this coy goddess ; that from stage to stage
Invites us still, but shifts as we pursue. 244

For, not to name the pains that pleasure brings
To counterpoise itself, relentless Fate
Forbids that we thro' gay voluptuous wilds
Should ever roam : and were the Fates more kind,
Our narrow luxuries would soon grow stale. 249

Were these exhaustless, nature would grow sick,
And, cloy'd with pleasure, squeamishly complain
That all is vanity, and life a dream.

Let nature rest : be busy for yourself,
And for your friend ; be busy even in vain
Rather than tease her fated appetites. 255

Who never fasts, no banquet e'er enjoys ;
Who never toils or watches, never sleeps.
Let nature rest : and when the taste of joy
Grows keen, indulge ; but shun satiety.

'Tis not for mortals always to be blest. 260

But him the least the dull or painful hours

44 Of life oppress, whom sober sense conducts,

And virtue, thro' this labyrinth we tread.

Virtue and sense I mean not to disjoin ;

49 Virtue and sense are one : and, trust me, still 265
A faithless heart betrays the head unsound.

d, ✕ Virtue (for mere good-nature is a fool)

49 Is sense and spirit, with humanity :

'Tis sometimes angry, and its frown confounds ;

'Tis even vindictive, but in vengeance just. ✕ 270

Knaves fain would laugh at it; some great ones dare;

But at his heart the most undaunted son

Of fortune dreads its name and awful charms.

255 To noblest uses this determines wealth ;

This is the solid pomp of prosperous days ; 275

The peace and shelter of adversity.

And if you pant for glory, build your fame

On this foundation, which the secret shock

Defies of Envy and all-sapping Time.

260 The gaudy gloss of fortune only strikes 280

The vulgar eye : the suffrage of the wise

The praise that's worth ambition, is attain'd
By sense alone, and dignity of mind.

Virtue, the strength and beauty of the soul,
Is the best gift of Heaven : a happiness 285
That even above the smiles and frowns of fate
Exalts great Nature's favourites : a wealth
That ne'er encumbers, nor can be transferr'd.
Riches are oft by guilt and baseness earn'd ;
Or dealt by chance, to shield a lucky knave, 290
Or throw a cruel sunshine on a fool.
But for one end, one much-neglected use,
Are riches worth your care : (for nature's wants
Are few, and without opulence supply'd.)
This noble end is, to produce the soul ; 295
To shew the virtues in their fairest light ; +
To make humanity the minister
Of bounteous Providence ; and teach the breast
That generous luxury the gods enjoy.

Thus, in his graver vein, the friendly sage 300
Sometimes declaim'd. Of right and wrong he taught
Truths as refin'd as ever Athens heard ;
And (strange to tell !) he practis'd what he preach'd.
Skill'd in the passions, how to check their sway
He knew, as far as reason can control 305
The lawles powers. But other cares are mine :
Form'd in the school of Pæon, I relate
What passions hurt the body, what improve :
Avoid them, or invite them, as you may.

Know then, whatever cheerful and serene 310
Supports the mind, supports the body too.
Hence, the most vital movement mortals feel
Is hope : the balm and life-blood of the soul.
It pleases, and it lasts. at least returns Indulgent Heaven +
Sent down the kind delusion, thro' the paths 315
Of rugged life to lead us patient on ;
And make our happiest state no tedious thing.

We cannot be without it.
Our greatest good, and what we least can spare,
Is hope : the last of all our evils, fear.

But there are passions grateful to the breast, 320
And yet no friends to life: perhaps they please
Or to excess, and dissipate the soul ;
Or while they please, torment. The stubborn clown,
The ill-tam'd ruffian, and pale usurer,
(If love's omnipotence such hearts can mould) 325
May safely mellow into love ; and grow
Refin'd, humane, and generous, if they can. *veramente!*
Love in such bosoms never to a fault
Or pains or pleases. But, ye finer souls,
Form'd to soft luxury, and prompt to thrill 330
With all the tumults, all the joys and pains,
That beauty gives ; with caution and reserve
Indulge the sweet destroyer of repose,
Nor court too much the queen of charming cares.
For, while the cherish'd poison in your breast 335
Ferments and maddens; sick with jealousy,

Absence, distrust, or even with anxious joy,
The wholesome appetites and powers of life
Dissolve in languor. The coy stomach loathes
The genial board : your cheerful days are gone ;
The generous bloom that flush'd your cheeks is fled.
To sighs devoted and to tender pains,
Pensive you sit, or solitary stray,
And waste your youth in musing. Musing first
Toy'd into care your unsuspecting heart :

345

It found a liking there, a sportful fire,
And that fomented into serious love ;
Which musing daily strengthens and improves
Thro' all the heights of fondness and romance:
And you're undone, the fatal shaft has sped,

350

If once you doubt whether you love or no.

The body wastes away ; th' infected mind,
Dissolv'd in female tenderness, forgets
Each manly virtue, and grows dead to fame.

Sweet Heaven, from such intoxicating charms

355

Defend all worthy breasts ! Not that I deem

Love always dangerous, always to be shunn'd.
Love well repaid, and not too weakly funk
In wanton and unmanly tenderness,
Adds bloom to health ; o'er ev'ry virtue sheds 360
A gay, humane, a sweet, and generous grace,
And brightens all the ornaments of man.
But fruitless, hopeless, disappointed, rack'd
With jealousy, fatigu'd with hope and fear,
Too serious, or too languishingly fond, 365
Unnerves the body and unmans the soul.
And some have died for love ; and some run mad ;
And some with desperate hands themselves have slain.

Some to extinguish, others to prevent,
A mad devotion to one dangerous fair, 370
Court all they meet ; in hopes to dissipate
The cares of love amongst an hundred brides.
Th' event is doubtful : for there are who find
A cure in this ; there are who find it not.
'Tis no relief, alas ! it rather galls 375

The wound, to those who are sincerely sick.
For while from feverish and tumultuous joys
The nerves grow languid and the soul subsides,
The tender fancy smarts with every sting,
And what was love before is madness now. 380

Is health your care, or luxury your aim,
Be temperate still : when Nature bids, obey ;
Her wild impatient fallies bear no curb :
But when the prurient habit of delight,
Or loose imagination, spurs you on 385

To deeds above your strength, impute it not
To nature : nature all compulsion hates.
Ah ! let nor luxury nor vain renown
Urge you to feats you well might sleep without ;
To make what should be rapture a fatigue, 390

A tedious task ; nor in the wanton arms
Of twining Laïs melt your manhood down.
For from the colliquation of soft joys
How chang'd you rise ! the ghost of what you was !
Languid, and melancholy, and gaunt, and wan ;

Your veins exhausted, and your nerves unstrung.

Spoil'd of its balm and sprightly zest, the blood
Grows vapid phlegm ; along the tender nerves
(To each flight impulse tremblingly awake)

A subtle fiend that mimics all the plagues, 400
Rapid and restless springs from part to part.

The blooming honours of your youth are fallen ;
Your vigour pines ; your vital powers decay ;
Diseases haunt you ; and untimely age
Creeps on ; unsocial, impotent, and lewd. 405
Infatuate, impious, epicure ! to waste
The stores of pleasure, cheerfulness, and health !
Infatuate all who make delight their trade,
And coy perdition every hour pursue.

Who pines with love, or in lascivious flames
Consumes, is with his own consent undone ;
He chooses to be wretched, to be mad ;
And warn'd, proceeds, and wilful to his fate.
But there's a passion, whose tempestuous sway

Tears up each virtue planted in the breast, 415
And shakes to ruins proud philosophy.

For pale and trembling anger rushes in,
With fault'ring speech, and eyes that wildly stare ;
Fierce as the tiger, madder than the seas, 419
Desperate, and arm'd with more than human strength.

How soon the calm, humane, and polish'd man
Forgets compunction, and starts up a fiend !

Who pines in love, or wastes with silent cares,
Envy, or ignominy, or tender grief,
Slowly descends, and ling'ring, to the shades. 425
But he whom anger stings, drops, if he dies,
At once, and rushes apoplectic down ;
Or a fierce fever hurries him to hell.

For, as the body thro' unnumber'd strings
Reverberates each vibration of the foul ; 430
As is the passion, such is still the pain
The body feels : or chronic, or acute.

And oft a sudden storm at once o'erpowers
The life, or gives your reason to the winds.

Such fates attend the rash alarm of fear,

435

And sudden grief, and rage, and sudden joy.

There are, meantime, to whom the boist'rous fit

Is health, and only fills the sails of life.

For where the mind a torpid winter leads,

Wrapt in a body corpulent and cold,

440

And each clogg'd function lazily moves on ;

A generous sally spurns th' incumbent load,

Unlocks the breast, and gives a cordial glow.

But if your wrathful blood is apt to boil,

Or are your nerves too irritably strung,

445

Wave all dispute; be cautious, if you joke ;

Keep Lent for ever, and forswear the bowl.

For one rash moment sends you to the shades,

Or shatters ev'ry hopeful scheme of life,

And gives to horror all your days to come.

450

Fate, arm'd with thunder, fire, and ev'ry plague,

That ruins, tortures, or distracts mankind,

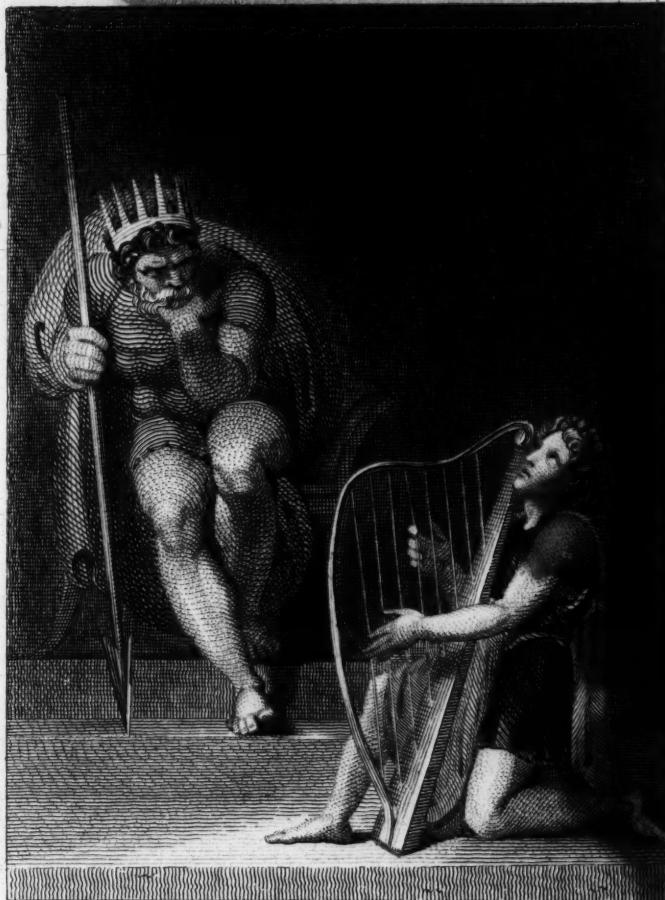
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T. Stothard R.A. pinx:

L. Parker sculp:

*Such was the Bard, whose heav'nly Strains of old
Appeasid the Fiend of melancholy Saul.*

O'erwhelms you not with woes so horrible
As your own wrath, nor gives more sudden blows.

While choler works, good friend, you may be wrong ;
Distrust yourself, and sleep before you fight.
Tis not too late to-morrow to be brave ;
If honour bids, to-morrow kill or die.

But calm advice against a raging fit 460

Avails too little ; and it braves the power
Of all that ever taught in prose or song,
To tame the fiend that sleeps a gentle lamb,
And wakes a lion. Unprovok'd and calm,
You reason well ; see as you ought to see, 465
And wonder at the madness of mankind :
Seiz'd with the common rage, you soon forget
The speculations of your wiser hours.

Beset with furies of all deadly shapes,
Fierce and insidious, violent and flow : 470
With all that urge or lure us on to fate :
What refuge shall we seek ? what arms prepare ?

Where reason proves too weak, or void of wiles
To cope with subtle or impetuous powers,
I would invoke new passions to your aid: 475
With indignation would extinguish fear,
With fear or generous pity vanquish rage,
And love with pride; and force to force oppose.

There is a charm, a power, that sways the breast;
Bids every passion revel or be still; 480
Inspires with rage, or all your cares dissolves;
Can sooth distraction, and almost despair.
That power is music: far beyond the stretch
Of those unmeaning warblers on our stage;
Those clumsy heroes, those fat-headed gods, 485
Who move no passion justly but contempt:
Who, like our dancers (light indeed and strong!)
Do wond'rous feats, but never heard of grace.
The fault is ours; we bear those monstrous arts;
Good Heaven! we praise them: we, with loudest peals,
Applaud the fool that highest lifts his heels; 491

And, with insipid shew of rapture, die
Of ideot notes impertinently long.
But he the Muse's laurel justly shares, 494
A poet he, and touch'd with Heaven's own fire ;
Who, with bold rage or solemn pomp of sounds,
Inflames, exalts, and ravishes the soul ;
Now tender, plaintive, sweet almost to pain,
In love dissolves you ; now in sprightly strains
Breathes a gay rapture thro' your thrilling breast ;
Or melts the heart with airs divinely sad ; 501
Or wakes to horror the tremendous strings.
Such was the bard, whose heavenly strains of old
Appeas'd the fiend of melancholy Saul.
Such was, if old and heathen fame say true, 505
The man who bade the Theban domes ascend,
And tam'd the savage nations with his song ;
And such the Thracian, whose melodious lyre,
Tun'd to soft woe, made all the mountains weep ;
Sooth'd even th' inexorable powers of hell, 510
And half redeem'd his lost Eurydice.

Music exalts each joy, allays each grief,
Expels diseases, softens every pain,
Subdues the rage of poison, and the plague;
And hence the wise of ancient days ador'd
One power of physic, melody, and song.

515



